

# COUNTRY LIFE

**THE** JOURNAL FOR ALL INTERESTED IN  
COUNTRY LIFE AND COUNTRY PURSUITS. **ILLUSTRATED.**

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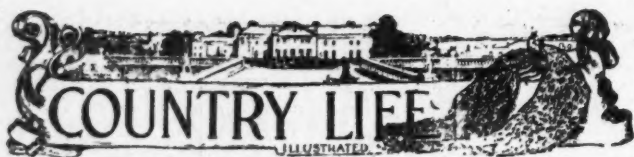
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THE Journal for all interested in

Country Life and Country Pursuits

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## THE ENGLISH . . . CHARACTER.

IN London as a whole there has been, besides the roaring and the flags, a touch of intensity and self-repression which has been most impressive, but yet a stranger new landed from a month at sea could have read the news in the people's eyes." Such is the strong sentence in which the sedate *Spectator* sums up the character of the manifestation of popular joy made by the people of London when, hotfoot upon the good news of the defeat and surrender of Cronje, came the welcome and indubitable intelligence of the relief of Ladysmith. The sentence itself, less sober and self-restrained than is the wont of the *Spectator*, may be taken as a pleasant illustration of the theory to be put forward in the lines following, and that theory is that, owing to causes which are not far to seek, and perhaps for other

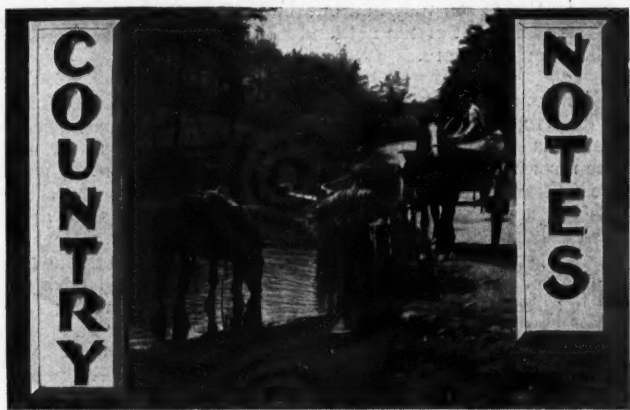
reasons which lie deeper and out of sight, the English character, or the character of a large section of Englishmen, has undergone a very remarkable change during recent years. We say the English character, because the remarkable demonstration of Thursday last came under our eyes in London, and therefore, although we are Britons all—not Britishers please—it is right in this case to say English; and we add the qualifying words "of a large section of Englishmen," because in many a country village the peasant retains all his old stolidity and all the primitive ignorance which is the cause of it. That lovely story of the Norfolk hind who, on learning that South Africa was more distant than London, sagely remarked that he always knew they were "a bad lot in the Sheeres," illustrates our meaning, and so does another, that of a Devonshire labourer, with a son in the Army in South Africa, who knew no more than that his son was somewhere in foreign parts. But in the towns there is an entirely new feeling. Those who witnessed the remarkable demonstration of Thursday, which rendered the heart of the City of London impenetrable to vehicular traffic from ten in the morning till midnight, may well be excused if they fail to remember any evidence of the "touch of intensity and self-repression" which the *Spectator* detected, perhaps in a West-End club. The intensity was there, but not the self-repression. For fourteen mortal hours, without anything whatsoever to keep it together beyond the occasional appearance of the Lord Mayor, or of a soldier, who might be carried shoulder-high, the crowd seethed to and fro, shouting itself hoarse, waving flags and hurling hats into the air. "You could have read the news in the people's eyes"—yes, the general news that something great and good had occurred, but not, of course, the special news that Ladysmith had been relieved. It was a grand and a memorable sight, such as could hardly have been seen, even if the like event had occurred, two or three generations ago.

Without a doubt there are those who consider that the whole demonstration was exaggerated and unreasonable, that it indicated a weakening of the fibre of the national character. In many quarters, and those most eminently respectable and even aristocratic, there has been a noticeable tendency to regret the ebullition of Thursday and to say: "If this fever of joy burns when Ladysmith is relieved, as it was bound to be so soon as the right tactics were employed, what will be done when victory is finally achieved?" That kind of view has been expressed mainly by those who did not see the demonstration with their own eyes, or hear it with their own ears, who escaped the thrilling contagion of it. From them we dissociate ourselves, being of opinion that there is no sufficient cause why popular joy which is real should not find its outlet. There is an excess of joyfulness, which is hysteria; but there is also an excess of self-control, which is not really self-control at all, but stolid apathy. Real self-control is shown by father, and mother, and wife when, pale-faced, dry-eyed, and steadfast, they look on son and husband sailing away to the front; but to refuse to participate in national rejoicing is merely to show want of proper feeling. To share in the joy and not to show it, to wear the mask of an impassive face while the blood is coursing fast and the nerves are quivering, is to deny oneself a keen and a harmless pleasure for the sake of what is, after all, merely a pose and a fashion. To share in the joy and to show it without reserve, to shout amid the shouting crew, is, as our experience shows, a tonic to the spirits. "Send her to some place where she will laugh and shout" was the advice of a great physician concerning a child who seemed to be failing for no particular reason, and it was good advice. To govern the emotions is good; to crush them under the heel is bad; and the fashion of absolutely repressing every sign of feeling is not an essential part of the English nature. England was "merrie" once—the spelling indicates the date roughly—and the fashion of wearing the mask of impassivity came in only with the Reformation. To those who compare Vandyck's portraits of foreign personages with his portraits of English subjects, as they may do to great advantage at Burlington House just now, our meaning will be plain. The foreigners are alert, vivacious, human; the Englishmen, with the exception of that wonderful Philip Wharton lent by the Czar, are stolid and unreal. That was no fault of the painter. It simply means that the lesson of wearing the fashionable mask, and of repressing all emotions, even the most honourable, had not been learned thoroughly.

To be alert, responsive, quick in sympathy, is, in our judgment, a sign not of national decadence, but of national advance. And if Englishmen have erred somewhat on the side of emotion of late, how great has been their excuse. The crisis through which we are passing is not nearly so great as many which have been seen before. When the Armada had taken the sea, when the Napoleonic invasion was threatened, when the Mutiny was in full and sanguinary progress, the suspense was infinitely more painful. But in those days men and women practised patience perforce; there was no alternative. There were no raucous newsvendors to render day and night hideous by their cries, there were no telegraphs by which good news or bad might be expected at any moment. A battle might be fought



in India and the result of it would not be known for weeks or months. Men might be anxious for news, but they could not be excited. In these days there is excitement to be expected round every corner. We may, and we do, get news from the interior of Africa of an event four or five hours old. It follows that it is a natural, a pardonable, and perhaps even a welcome, fact that, as a race, we are more sensitive than we were wont to be. In the meanwhile our practical strength has not abated. Our soldiers, home and colonial, fought as well at Paardeberg and at Ladysmith as their ancestors at Agincourt. We Englishmen are as strong and as brave and as dogged as ever; it will not hurt us that we have become a trifle more alert. In fact, it will do us a world of good.



**I**F the Queen courted popularity, which in fact she has never done, she certainly could not have thought of anything else half so popular as her decision to forego her visit to the Riviera in this time of anxiety, for there is anxiety still, although it is partially allayed. Those who really know most about the Queen and her sentiments in relation to the present war, who are not those who talk most, have maintained all along that the Queen would not go, although all the preparations went on just as if she were going. For, in the first place, the Queen is the soul of consideration, and it is obvious that her going to the Riviera at the present juncture would have involved a great deal of additional exertion for Ministers; and, in the second place, the Queen takes a keen personal interest in this war, and, while she mourns the losses as we all mourn them, there is no one in England more elated by a victory than she is, and no one in England or Africa more confident of ultimate success. In addition, Her Majesty has chosen to pay one of her few and welcome visits to London. She could have done nothing more wise, nothing more gracious.

It has been said in these columns before that if one wants really to find out about London, the provincial papers are the best sources of information. Here is an interesting piece of information, the fruit of a careful study of those papers. Even now the great makers of machinery are beginning to make their plans for the boom which they foresee will come with certainty at the end of the war. Already they have sent their agents out to Cape Town, already they are beginning the manufacture of engines and machinery. It is impossible to conceive a more striking example of men's faith in the saying that "Trade follows the Flag," and Trade has never yet been deceived.

It is quite clear that it is impossible to combine the sweet policy of being all things to all men with a definite view concerning the Budget. The *Times*, the *Standard*, and the *Morning Post* are more or less agreed in thinking that Sir Michael Hicks-Beach has missed a grand opportunity of reforming our finance and putting it on a wider basis. *Per contra*, the *Daily News* holds that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has faced his duty like a man, and the same sentiment is expressed rather more feebly by the *Daily Chronicle*. The solid fact which remains for most of us is that our income-tax will be half as much again next time we have to pay it. We must grin and bear it; the former if we can, the latter in any event.

We shall have to pay the bill in South Africa in other ways—beer, tobacco, tea, and spirits will be a trifle dearer. But although we shall all have to pay in this way, we practically shall not feel it, and it is not likely that any of us will consume less of these vehicles of taxation. On the other hand, the retail dealers in these commodities will grumble a great deal, but past experience shows that they may be trusted to look after themselves. Indeed, the main difficulty of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he is making an alteration in the incidence of indirect taxation, is so to arrange his figures as not to put money directly into the pockets of retail dealers. But arrange he never so cleverly, the retail dealers—especially in things which, like tobacco, are sold in

ounces and half ounces—are apt to get the better of the public and of him. On this head we have a suggestion to make. Where it is possible additions to taxation should be so made that the sum which the retail dealer shall have an excuse for adding to his prices shall be an exact quotient of the duty. Then the retail dealer, if he adds that sum to his prices, cannot be heard to say that his legitimate profits are reduced. In the particular case of tobacco, the question is whether the better class tobaccoists can be induced to recognise the existence of farthings. They practically refused to do so when the duty was reduced. They have no excuse now for raising their prices when they refused to reduce them before.

In the foregoing note it has been said that most of us will not feel the indirect taxation. From a mathematical point of view, of course, we ought to feel it, but in fact, as everybody knows from past experience, we shall not feel it nearly so acutely as the increased income-tax. Again—and this is a point which sometimes escapes notice—the income-tax wrings the withers of one class more than those of another, even when the two classes are paying equal amounts. For example, the recipient of an income from investments, or from a Government appointment, is paid "less income-tax," and he gets into the habit of regarding the money so paid to him as his real income, which in fact it is. And the case is much the same with owners of land. On the other hand, the professional man—the lawyer, the doctor, the artist, the man of letters—feels the tax very much more acutely, not because he pays more, but because once a year he has to draw a cheque for an amount, more or less considerable, in favour of the income-tax collector. It is very hard to live all the year through keeping constantly before one the consciousness that as to one shilling out of every sovereign one is really a trustee for the State, and when the time comes for fulfilling the trust to the uttermost farthing it is distinctly uncomfortable. It is going to be half as much again worse than it was.

Having regard to the very numerous varieties of opinion on the matter, there seems really to be no reason why COUNTRY LIFE should not have an opinion on the subject in dispute, and that opinion is quite clear. It is that the war in South Africa has been waged for the sake of freedom and in the interests of posterity, and that, therefore, it would have been perfectly just to borrow the whole of the money required. This could have been done with very great ease, and there is practically no doubt that the investment of the money so borrowed in "South Africans"—not in the Stock Exchange sense—would in the long run have been exceedingly remunerative. As it is we pay most of the piper's fee. Posterity will profit. Also we might spread the taxation more widely. Bountied sugar, for example, might be burdened without seriously affecting the raw material of even the jam industry. Tea, on the other hand, is justly taxed. It is the raw material of gossip, not always of the kindest, and of nervous diseases. Nobody wants them.

Meanwhile, in a paper devoted to outdoor pursuits, it seems natural to express a word of admiration for the ingenious manner in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer has circumvented the wholesale dealers in dutiable commodities who might have escaped the snare of the fowler. The Budget was brought in before its time; the announcement that it would be brought in was made on Friday; very little work was done by the Customs on Saturday; on Monday again very little was done, not that the merchants did not flock to the Custom House doors, but simply because the officials somehow could not get through it, and, besides, you may not take out more than a limited quantity on any day. Tons of tobacco and hogsheads of spirits were cleared.

But the amount cleared was nothing like so great as the owners of bonded stores desired that it should be. In fact, the Chancellor of the Exchequer reminds us of nothing more closely than of the crafty wildfowler approaching a flock of plover, and we are bound to say that this part of his work was very well done, and we suspect that he has gained a good deal of ready money from those interests which feared that they would be touched, whereas in fact they have escaped. We wonder how much champagne and how many hundred dozens of foreign wines generally were cleared on Saturday and Monday.

One of the victims of indirect taxation who cannot, from the manner in which the tax is levied, do anything to escape, is the brewer. For, as the writer of the political notes in the *Times* explains, the tax is levied at a certain stage during the process of manufacture. However, those gossiping gentlemen who are called lobbyists seem to have ascertained that the brewers in the House at any rate are well content to bear their share in the Bill. And well, on the whole, they may be, for the consumption of beer in the United Kingdom is not likely to fall unless the price becomes absolutely prohibitive. Indeed, there is a good deal of truth in the cynical remark once made by

a great physician that if bottled beer only cost as much as champagne it would be regarded as the most choiceworthy of luxuries. By way of curious personal coincidences it may be mentioned that the writer of the present group of notes received on the same morning the report of the Budget speech and the announcement that his orders to make a modest investment in sound brewery preference shares had been carried out. He was not in the least dismayed, for he does not think at the moment of writing that he would have gained anything appreciable by waiting a day or two.

A lesson that we have perforce been learning more perfectly than we have had a former opportunity of acquiring, is the best size of cavalry charger for enduring the scanty rations and hard lodging and work of a campaign. These features we may assume to be common to campaigns in general, although the present war in South Africa no doubt presents peculiarities of its own, such as the tsetse, the rocky nature of much of the ground, the semi-tropical character of the veldt grass, and the great changes between the diurnal and nocturnal temperatures. These features are special, but there are many that must be common to most campaigns, and so far as our present information goes, it would point to the value of the small and wiry horse and the comparative uselessness of the heavy charger.

We have seen several types of shield suggested for infantry sharpshooters, and generally for the attack of entrenched positions. A radical fault that appears in those that we have seen, together with much that is admirably ingenious in the way of portability and effectual defence of the man who is sheltered by them, is that their inclination is such that they must inevitably deflect the bullet sideways, to the obvious danger of the man at the side of him whose shield is struck. Surely it ought to be a first principle of their construction that their sides should be so inclined as to deflect the bullet downwards, where it may bury itself in the ground, unless it be of very rocky nature, without further mischief.

The remarkable and perhaps even excessive politeness of Lord Roberts to Cronje calls to memory a story of the Duke of Wellington which is to the point, because it shows that great soldiers have great courtesy, and worth telling, because it is characteristic and has not been told before, even in Lord Stanhope's memoirs. "Late in the forties His Grace was present at the evening reception of a great lady in London, and was enjoying the somnolence not ill-adapted to his great age, when the arrival of Marshal Marmont was announced; the Duke promptly brightened up and welcomed the newly-arrived guest, begged him to renew during his stay in England his acquaintance with Strathfieldsaye, and reminded him of an earlier and pleasurable visit. The Marshal accepted the offer and expressed the gratification he always felt at interviews with His Grace—with one marked exception in July, 1812, near Salamanca. The Duke of Wellington, with courtesy and acumen equal to that of the Marshal, said: 'I remember that occasion, Marshal, and maybe even that meeting would not have been ungrateful to you had you not been wounded early in the day.' The courtier and the man were co-existent, for it is known that Bonnet, in temporary command when Marmont was disabled, failed to show adequate tactical skill during the crucial *quart d'heure* between the disablement of Marmont and the arrival of Clausel."

When a movement of any importance is started in this country, it is amusing to note how deputation and counter-deputation oppose one another. Sir John Gorst had the country gentlemen before him at the beginning of the session urging the need of agricultural education; last week the schoolmasters appealed to him against it. Their main contention was that already they are over-burdened with subjects. One cannot deny that this is true. But it is doubtful policy to impart a smattering of so many things; fewer subjects more thoroughly taught would probably give better results in the end. At any rate, the country gentlemen do not desire either to heap more work on the teachers or to oppose them in any way. The end sought for is one of national importance, and if properly understood would lead to no difference. We could all pull in the same boat. A business-like way to settle the matter would be for one who has sympathy with both sides to make a thorough enquiry into the matter. He would find that the Rural Exodus has damaged the country schoolmaster, whose payment, depending as it usually does on the amount of grant earned, has diminished with the falling-off of scholars. It is also beyond question that the present system does not interest the pupils sufficiently for educational purposes. Having established this point, as he could easily do by irrefutable facts, his next business would be to call the shrewder teachers into council, learn what they considered practicable, and so gain material for the new syllabus. At the end it cannot be anything but a compromise, that being the only way to adjust such difficulties. But the arrangement, while riding rough-shod over no one, ought to be strong enough to yield a perceptible benefit.

The Duke of Devonshire, Sir John Gorst, and the Parliamentary majority are all in favour of something being done.

Oxford beat Cambridge in the Association football match, and, so far as figures go, they won easily, for two goals are incalculably more than none. But those who know the Association game, the small goal, and the great difficulty of scoring, are well aware that when two sides are nearly equal, chance has a good deal to do in deciding which way the victory shall go. In this particular game Oxford were, take them for all in all, the stronger and the better team. Their backs were both more powerful and more judicious than those who represented Cambridge; their forwards—they had lost one of the best of them only a day or two before—were not much inferior to those whom they opposed. Then in Wilkinson they had one of the finest goal-keepers who ever stood in front of the net, and a good goal-keeper is half the battle—perhaps more.

The annual general meeting of the Marylebone Cricket Club has been fixed for May 2nd, and at its termination the meeting will be made special to consider, and almost certainly to confirm, three recommendations of the committee, which will make some little difference in the mode of playing our great game: (1) Six balls to constitute the over; (2) Declaration permissible at or after the luncheon interval on the second day; (3) The side which leads by 150 runs in a three days' match, by 100 runs in a two days' match, and by 75 runs in a one day match, shall have the option of calling on the other side to follow its innings. In regard to the last two proposals we will say nothing, but is not the first, although aiming at the much-to-be-desired end of getting through the matches more quickly, likely to defeat its purpose somewhat by putting the yet more weary bowler still more at the mercy of the batsman, who does not have to run the boundary hits? It is a point of view that we hope the meeting will consider.

The ornithological sportsmen, and lovers of wild life generally, who compose the Society for Preventing Cruelty to Birds held their annual meeting last week. It appears that the chief victims to fashion just now are humming-birds and birds of paradise. They have been sold by the ten thousand this season to minister to the barbarities of fashion. One would imagine that the point to be aimed at is to secure the co-operation of leaders of Society, so as to get discredit cast on the practice of using bird skins and feathers for the adornment of the feminine body. Myriads who never look at the recorded doings of Society are sensitive to the whispers of fashion. We cannot understand, however, why these beneficent reformers make no protest against the persistent capturing and caging of migrants, and even other British birds. It is less cruel to shoot a nightingale or a cuckoo outright than to exhibit it for days in a cage 18in. long. Some tame birds are no doubt beautifully kept, but not by the pot-hunting exhibitor.

Not altogether fantastic perhaps is the suggestion that arose out of the emu's egg which was a feature of the curious luncheon lately given at the Camera Club by Mr. Stevens, of the auction rooms in King Street, Covent Garden. The suggestion was virtually that the depressed agriculturist should try an emu farm, with a view to the sale of the birds' eggs. Emus thrive in many parks in this country, and lay freely. At present they lay in mid-winter, the season that corresponds with their native June; but probably they would soon learn greater prudence, for it may be remembered that the black swan, when first imported from the Antipodes, used to follow the same unwisely conservative ways, but has learnt since to accommodate itself better to the changed seasons. Why should the emu not do the same? And after all an egg laid in winter is an egg, though it may not have the same chance as one laid in a milder time of becoming a chick. There seem to be no two opinions of the edible excellence of the big egg. It appears to have none of the coarseness that we might think *a priori* (that is to say, in ignorance) would go with its great size.

At the sea anglers' dinner the other day the financial report of the society was all that could be wished, but the lack of cod fish off our shores was the subject of general lamentation. There was compensation in the good takes of coal fish and conger that were reported. A conger of 29lb. must be something a little more than a joke to haul into a boat, and to handle successfully when you get him there. This was the prize conger of the year taken by the angle, but there were others not so very far behind him. We are not sure whether the prize for the best take of this winter season ought not to go to the lady who is reported as having caught an 11lb. pike on her lawn at East Molesey. It should be explained, perhaps, that the lawn was flooded at the time; and, indeed, in the Thames Valley during the late floods there must have been quite good fishing out of many a window. So great a rainfall in so few weeks, it is said, has not been recorded since 1875, and never have such floods been out so long within the memory of that illustrious person, "the oldest inhabitant."





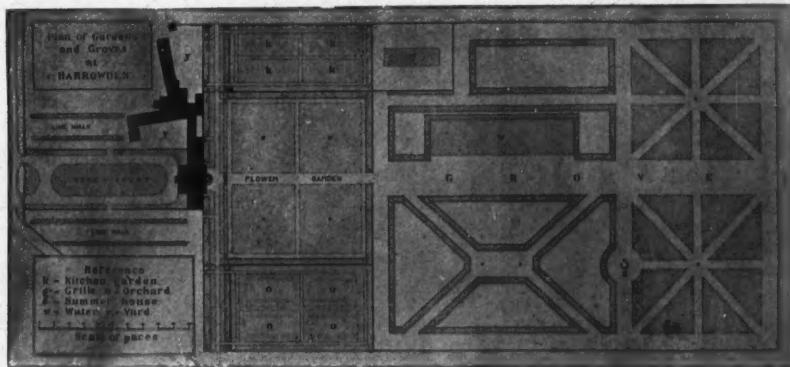
THE last paper on this subject traced the fall of fashion from the grand pictorial effects of a past age to the futilities of the present, when botanical detail claims the whole attention of most garden-makers; but, on reflection, one or two things seem to need a little explanation before proceeding. In the last paper, when contrasting the views of Evelyn with those of the present-day journals, it might have seemed to be a comparison unfair to the latter, as the very name "Horticultural" signifies that they deal with plants, and not with design. And so it is, as we most of us understand it; but we should remember that "hortus" means an enclosed space, and not only the things in it, so that the meaning of the word has slid as far from the original as has the present ideal of a garden.

That is one point, and the other is, that supposing Milton's picture of the Garden of Eden to have led to the introduction of the landscapist, it may well be asked why that change failed to take effect till 150 years after his time. The answer to this seems to be that a counter influence arose before the old tradition was lost in the person of Dutch William, with his ideas of splendour in buildings and gardens. His was an influence sufficiently strong to divert the current of opinion for another half century. With this word in explanation we may proceed.

It would be wearisome as well as unnecessary to describe a typical modern garden in order to illustrate the contrast between new and old. They are to be seen on every hand, and it will be more profitable to direct attention to those few of the older sort that remain before they become things of the past. The three chief

characteristics of old gardens are enclosure, subdivision, and change of level, the whole scheme being treated as a setting to the house, and thoughtfully disposed in relation to it as a centre. Wherever we find them these principles are frankly applied with a definite object: masonry for the outer enclosures, hedges for the inner, and miniature hedges again to the compartments for flowers.

To unimaginative ears this will all sound very formal—for to them formality is a sin in itself. But though the plotting of an



old garden was invariably formal, the effect was never anything but pictorial, for they did not, as we have been apt to do, fill the beds with flowers formally planted, nor did they neglect to encourage the growth of wild rose and honeysuckle over the masonry. But certain growing things they felt should be made

to conform in character with the neighbouring architecture; these were the dividing hedges, the single trees that were used to mark accents in the design, and the borders to compartments for flowers. On these things they used the shears, and since the turf was to form a carpet of green, the more it could be rolled and mown the better. Inside the garden forest trees were allowed no place, for the simple reason that as they attained great size the plants would suffer from their shadow; besides, the roots of big trees rob the soil of its richness, and it is simply impossible to grow roses well near them; but outside they were welcomed both for their protection from the wind and as an invaluable background to the garden. Not only were forest trees never intended to invade the flower garden, but they were rigorously excluded from all except the bowling green. It may be mentioned here that every complete lay-out used to be divided into a number of parts, each of which had its proper use and aspect. Just as indoors there



TREE BACKGROUND.

were the dining-room, library, and gallery, so out of doors there was one court for guests to alight in, another for flowers, and a third for the lawn game of the period; they called them respectively the forecourt, parterre, and bowling green, and there was, too, the base-court where the housework aired itself, the coronary garden for herbs, the fruit garden—as we should say, kitchen—and the apple orchard. Outside of this the groves, avenues, and fish-ponds would begin; but at present we are dealing only with the lesser lay-out, so of them later. The arrangement and proportions of the courts were infinitely varied, but some, if not all, of those mentioned above are always to be found ranged about an old house in the country where the original surroundings have not been totally obliterated.

Even in towns every moderate-sized house would have two, if not more, of these courts. Devonshire House still retains its forecourt—which, by the way, sadly lacks a green oval centre, with large lead urns round it—and, for that matter, it retains its garden, too, though that has lost much of its original character. The forecourt of Chesterfield House still remains in part, and a neighbouring street recalls, in name at least, the fair garden that once stretched away eastward from the stairways.

A simple instance from the Midlands will serve to illustrate the system of arrangement. The annexed survey is of a plan designed by Webb, the pupil and nephew of Inigo Jones. The lesser lay-out only is given, and this is planned in the form of a parallelogram with its longer sides north and south. The house is plotted on the centre line, and round it are ranged the courts. On the north lies the forecourt, hardly exceeding the width of the house itself. To the east the whole span is given to parterre, with a raised terrace on the south, and what once was probably an arrangement of green vaults to the north. These two courts and the green court south of the house have fine gates and approaches in their centres; beyond this is a bowling green, then a rose garden, and north of these again the basecourt and kitchen garden. The whole scheme is most compact in



GARDEN DOOR.

arrangement, and there is almost a touch of modern feeling in the tradesman's entrance between kitchen garden and forecourt.

As another lay-out that is fairly regular in composition, one might instance the grounds at Harrowden. There, too, the whole space has been walled in to start with; then it has been subdivided into forecourt, grove, and basecourt on the entrance front, the bowling green in this case being in the forecourt. On the side towards the flower garden the ground is divided into three quadrangles, with a broad terrace, crossed by grilles at intervals, running the whole width under the windows. The middle compartment is sunk, and forms the flower garden, the spaces on either side being orchard and kitchen garden. From the house a broad turf path leads to a central grille, through which the grove is reached; this is pierced in all directions by shady glades, with here a summer-house, and there a piece of formal water. It will be noticed that in the last instance there was no grove enclosed within the walls, so this scheme may be taken as having advanced a step in the direction of a later method; but the grove is still part of the lesser lay-out, and enclosed accordingly. Perhaps there has been more building and planting in the last twenty years than at any other time; but for this concert of arrangement 'twixt house and grounds in modern places we may look in vain.

(To be continued.)

### Shooting Gossip.

A CORRESPONDENT who "can generally depend on killing about sixty good pigeons out of a hundred at 28yd. rise," is inclined "to risk £800 or £1,000 at pigeon shooting," and he wants to know if his form is sufficiently good to make it worth his while to risk losing that sum. The question is one of general interest. It is usually accepted as an axiom that the man who can kill on an average sixty-eight birds out of a hundred can make 100 per cent. in the course of the season; in other words, that for every £100 which he spends in cartridges, birds, entries, and so forth, he can win £200. Personally, I am of opinion that nowadays it is not worth any man's while to attempt to supplement his income by winning stakes, prizes, and pools, at the Gun Club and elsewhere, unless he can positively depend upon being able at all times to kill at least 79.9 per cent. of all the birds that he fires at. Even then he will not amass a



ALLEY BY FORECOURT.

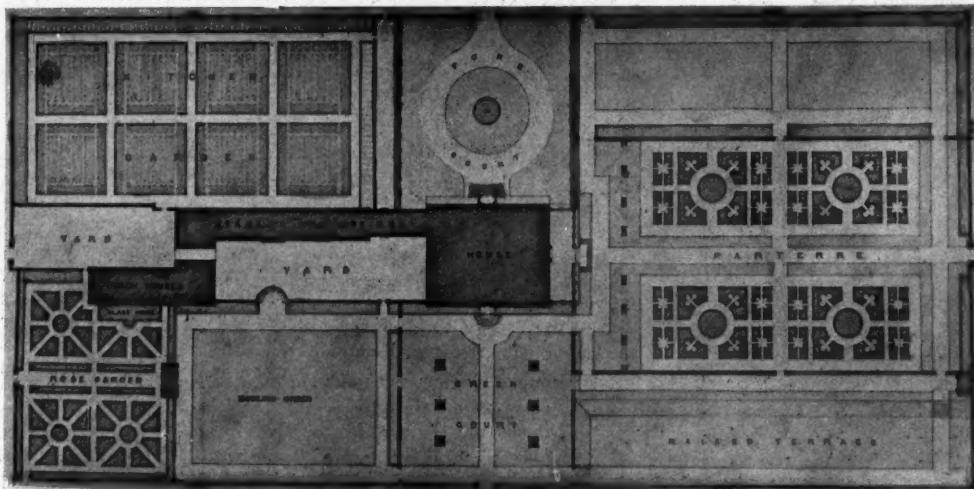


fortune, and therefore my correspondent will understand that it would be folly for him or for any man whose average score of kills is but sixty or so out of a hundred—an extraordinarily high average at game—to expect to win money by trap shooting.

The half pistol-grip is at last forcing its way to the front amongst English shooting men. So, at least, several of our best-known gunmakers tell me, and when gunmakers volunteer a statement of that sort they seldom make a mistake. The half pistol-grip for shot-guns has been popular in America for many years, and both American game-shots and American trap-shots repeatedly enquire why it is that we dislike it, or at any rate appear to dislike it. I have often asked the question myself, and the reply has almost invariably been, "Oh, it looks so ugly." Now is that a valid reason for refusing to adopt the pistol stock, which, I am convinced, must enable every shooter to handle his guns with far greater ease? As a fact, it is impossible for anyone to grasp a plain grip as firmly as a pistol-grip when the gun is mounted, and it stands to reason that the greater control the shooter has over his weapons the better he will shoot. Presumably we are at last beginning to find this out for ourselves, but the average English sportsman is so extraordinarily conservative in his views about firearms, and all appertaining thereto, that in eight cases out of ten he will tell you flatly that what was good enough for his father is good enough for him. Only last week a well-known shooting man made that very remark to me when I asked him why he persisted in using hammer guns. He seemed to consider the statement quite incontestable, and added, as an afterthought, "Besides, a gun looks so bare without hammers!"

Under these circumstances it seems strange that the one-trigger gun should already have attained such widespread popularity. After the hammerless gunlock had been introduced, eight or ten years elapsed before shooting men would look at it at all. Yet the one-trigger system is, comparatively speaking, a new invention. At first it was objected to because with a gun so constructed the left barrel could not be discharged before the right. That objection has, of course, long since been overcome, and now there can be little doubt but that within a few years the double-trigger shot-gun will have been relegated to oblivion. One would think that by this time the sporting gun had reached perfection. Our enterprising gunmakers are not of that opinion, however, for several of them are, to my own knowledge, perfecting minor improvements, which I shall have occasion to describe later.

The eighth edition of Mr. W. W. Greener's interesting little book, "The



OF GARDEN MAKING: PLAN OF HARROWDEN.

Breech-loader and How to Use It," has just been issued by Messrs. Cassell and Co., and is well worth reading by young and old shooters alike, being much less technical than the earlier editions. Mr. Greener is, and always has been, a strong advocate for the "hold on" style of aiming, and in spite of all that has been said and written in favour of the "hold ahead" style, there is not the slightest doubt but that the former method is the correct one. Nevertheless the author devotes several pages to describing in detail the "hold ahead" theory, which, according to his own showing, is extremely complicated. "Taking the speed at which a game bird is flying as forty miles per hour," he tells us, "this means that the bird flying across the shooter will have travelled about 12 in. before the quickest shooter can have brought his gun to position and pulled the trigger. The following delays may be assumed as unavoidable :

Time occupied in raising the gun, 3-100sec.

Time occupied in pulling trigger, 1-200sec.

Time occupied in igniting charge, 1-200sec.

Time occupied in shot travelling 40yds., 14-100sec.

During which time the bird will have travelled 101.6in. or thereabouts, and to hit a mark 10ft. 6in. to the right or left of the mark aimed at, the muzzle of the barrel would require to be more than 3in. to the right or left of the line of aim. As pointed out previously, if, instead of being able to pull the trigger in 1-200sec., the shooter needs 3-100sec., the bird will have flown 16in. further than is stated above," and so on and so on. After grappling with a few pages of this sort of thing, the reader is bound to agree with the author that the "aiming ahead" theory ought at once to be discarded in favour of the theory that in order to shoot not only well, but brilliantly and in good style, it is best always to aim almost "dead on."

B. I. T.

# A BEGINNER ON SKI.

IT is hardly necessary to make an apology for writing about a new sport, but it is a little unkind to tell one's fellow-countrymen and friends how enjoyable it is when a winter crossing of the North Sea is the prelude. After all, it may be said that everyone knows how the fresh air-loving Norwegian straps on his snow-shoes and careers about his snow-covered fields and forests in the depth of winter. It may be that many people have seen the annual jumping matches at Christiania, and have described them. But which is the pleasantest, to stand by a race-course all day and see the horses race, or to sit in a saddle

oneself and ride across country, even though the mount be not of the finest blood nor the rider possessed of a very large amount of cross-country courage? And apart from the pleasures of a new sensation, a little practical experience enables one to appreciate the finished performances of others so much better, and enhances the wonder at the courage of the Norwegians' flying leaps and their steady doggedness in forest runs.

So off for the North Sea and its winter terrors ! Do they exist ? Well, if perfectly smooth water, a steady ship with a cargo of grindstones, a most courteous captain, and a passage at half the summer fares, constitute terrors, let us accept them. Grindstones make good ballast, and those we carry will be used in the wood pulp industry ; the paper they help to produce will be the return cargo.

It is cold, of course, and when within a few hours of arrival whitened ice-floes dot the sea and make a "swish, swish" as your ship thrusts them aside, you begin to realise you are nearing a land of winter. Soon the floes become thicker and cover the fjord; the noise becomes "scrunch, scrunch," angry and grinding. Ere long the passage is confined to a narrow strip kept open by the daily passing of a sharp-bowed steam ice-breaker, whilst on all sides other ships are solidly frozen in, their crews walking to and fro on the frozen harbour. You are nearing the land of Nansen. In the distance gleam the snow-covered hills behind Christiania, the scene of your coming trials, falls, and final triumphs.

When you are measured for ski, an arm is raised to its full height, standing. This total height gives the length of ski the wearer needs—say, from 7ft. to 8ft. long. You can have a common deal pair or a “swell” pair of elm, decorated. All are made some 4½ in. wide, curved up in front, flat at the back, and the foot is fastened in the centre. Underneath them, for part of their length, is a groove to prevent side-slipping. A strap comes across the toe, and heel straps from this keep the foot well in place; the back of the foot is thus left free to be raised, as, for instance, when taking sliding steps over level snow. As a rule, boots cut in the style of the Lapps’ footwear are necessary, thick but pliable, and large enough for two pairs of thick socks. A strong staff completes this modest outfit.

Kind helpers are not wanting to assist the beginner in his first essay, for not only is every Norwegian anxious to welcome friends to share with him his dry, bracing winter atmosphere, but he takes a pride in his national sport. Histories of sport are tedious, and we will take for granted that it is known how this mode of travel over the crust of deep snow was at first practised of necessity by the peasants of Telemarken, and was subsequently taken up by townfolk as a recreation. But it is well to state that no class of professional has yet arisen; all who practise it are amateurs. Neither is any betting or gambling associated with it, despite the intense emulation between expert jumpers and between the clubs to which they belong.

So out you walk from a warm house, not too thickly coated, to the snow-covered fields stretching for miles at the forest base, firmly strap on your<sup>7</sup> ski, and begin to scuffle along. They must be kept perfectly parallel. The snow is quite a yard deep, but to your surprise the ski sink in only about half an inch. You feel that you are on some kind of roller-bearing automatic gliding arrangement, when suddenly the ski get crossed in front—how it happens you don't know—and in an instant you are floundering on one side. Out goes your arm, but it sinks deep, deep in the snow; your head and shoulders are lower than your feet. Struggling is no

good; your friend laughs and counts "one," a horror of absolute incapacity even to stand upright again seals over you, and helplessness is a word at last understood. Then slowly bending your legs, you get the backs of the ski— which by this time are to you merely awful runners—underneath, roll yourself over on them, and finally rise from the crouching position. Another trial and you do better, and confidence returns, but as you urge onwards with your friend in front "showing how," more haste brings worse speed, and again a large hole in the snow shows traces of violent contortions. Tumbles in such snow never hurt, but the number of new muscles that have to be exerted in rising, and which soon begin to proclaim their existence, is surprising. Not for a moment is it allowed to remove one's ski—that would be against all etiquette and rule. So on you go, until a gentle upward slope is reached, and here for the first time you must lift up each foot and clamp down your ski hard and firm to gain foothold and to prevent yourself sliding backward. The slope gets steeper, and as you are a beginner you are allowed to zigzag in long upward tracks. But what is your friendly guide doing? Straight up the hill he goes, taking immense strides, turning his feet well out and leaving behind him marks pointing right and left like a fish-bone. This method needs some practice, for each long ski must be lifted and planted down far enough to clear its fellow, and the ankles must be turned inwards at each step so as to give a side purchase against the snow. On a really steep slope the beginner may go up sideways, making, in fact, a right or left close step as in drilling. It is hot and exhilarating work, and there is no time to get cold, despite the fact that the thermometer may be 20deg. below freezing. At the top of the hillock a surprise awaits you. You have crossed the level and climbed up; now you must learn to slide down. The friend says, "Watch me!" puts his feet together, starts down, and as you look at him he quickly gets smaller and smaller, in just the same way that the last carriage of an express train diminishes. How fine, how easy it seems! And, leaving your staff, you try to copy the exploit. For 10yds. or 15yds. a momentary sense of rush and speed sends your heart beating with an unaccustomed joy, and then —? Well, you are not quite certain if gravity exists: the world seems in a whirl; a cloud of powdery snow envelops you; it has bathed your face, got down your neck, and the silence is broken by the mentor's distant laughter, and his congratulations to you on knowing how to turn a somersault. — Once more you lie helpless, but uninjured, on Nature's softest cushion. Your mistake has been to keep upright. Lean forward next time, so that the body is at right angles to the slope of the hill. You cannot tumble

forwards—the smooth ski will take care of that. So with a little practice comes the ability to slide quickly down the hillside, and this too in a fashion which is much pleasanter than if on a sled or toboggan.

As in most things when rudiments have been mastered, their application opens out new vistas of exploration, and it is not many days before the guide and counsellor proposes a forest trip "just up to my little mountain hut." As the Glasgow merchant has his cottage on the Clyde, so up in the pine-clad hills does the Christianian have his retreat. Are there not days in the lives of most of us that stand out in relief, when the sun has been so bright, the air so clear, and Nature so attractive, that we revel in being alive? Such a day had dawned, and with it came two ladies to guide the visitor to the hut, whither the host had started earlier to prepare for their reception. Now, there is nothing else in the world at all like the female costume that is donned for a ski expedition. Words fail to describe its charm. It must be left to the reader with artistic tendencies to imagine a dress suitable for the exertion involved, and at the same time eminently becoming to the blue eyes, fair hair, and fresh complexions of the country.

The start is made, winding up between the pines, skirting frozen lakes, between masses of rocks that ring with echoes of laughter, on, on we go, and suddenly reach a little dell of great beauty. Tall fir trees stand like sentinels with their snow mantles, there are birds twittering, the air is full of glittering spangles of frozen snow, and for a moment you think you are actually walking through fairyland and taking a part in a fairy story.

A turn in the track discloses a dreadfully high hill that must be surmounted, so steep that it can only be attacked with the side step, and somewhat laborious it is. But what a view from the summit! All is snow, snow, clean, crisp, and white, bathed in a flood of sunlight. The sky is an Italian blue, shading off into pale green at the horizon, and far off is a range of rounded peaks. In three hours the hut is reached, and proves to be a gorgeously carved, painted, and furnished residence, built indeed of timber baulks crossed at the corners, but hung inside with tapestries, and made cheerful with a blazing fire of yard-long birch logs that roar up the wide chimney in the corner. It is no mere picnic

meal that is spread for us. Bouillon of the best comes first, and a choice of three liqueurs to finish.

But some more business has to be got through on the snow before the early setting sun has dropped, and our host takes the hand of a lady, and together they fly down a hill. Halfway down this hill is a little platform of levelled snow, and as they reach it both spring forward into the air, flying onwards in a graceful trajectory till their ski once more touch the sloping hill. With increased impetus they speed on until the level of the snow-covered lake is reached. Then hands are unclasped, and each, with a well-balanced curve, swings round, and so comes to a stop.

If the forest is beautiful by day, it is still more fascinating by night under the moonlight. No time now for the learner to tumble; go he must, or miss his supper at home. In and out through the trees, swinging first to one side, then to the other, to escape the giant trunks, led on by the calls of his companions and the red gleam of the pine torches they carry.

Strange to say, one does not feel stiff the day following an expedition of this sort. There is a sense of suppleness and fitness that produces a longing to be off and at it again.

A few days after comes the great day when all the able-bodied inhabitants of Christiania flock out to see the flower of their ski clubs compete for the King's annual prize. In all probability there is no athletic meeting in any part of the world where so much manly courage and pluck is displayed as in the immense hillside leaps that are taken by the competitors. But this is "another story," being the culmination of the art.

The fascination of ski lies in the extreme mobility of their wearer, and the facility they afford for traversing places inaccessible on foot. Fortunately there are numerous districts with plenty of snow still available as late as Easter for those who cannot find time for holiday-making earlier in the winter.

"Wouldn't you rather skate than go on ski?" is a question which those who have tasted the nectar of the latter answer with a sad smile and a shake of the head. As a matter of fact, they would rather have one day on ski than a whole winter of skating.

HARRY W. CHUBB.



SIR EDWARD GREY says that the quality chiefly wanted by an angler is not so much patience as self-control—that is to say, the mastery over temper that is requisite if one is to contend with any success against "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" in the shape of fish escaping, line entangling, fly catching itself in branches, and the rest of it. The pursuit of angling has well been called the contemplative man's recreation, for unless a man be of the contemplative temperament, or at least have a measure of that lymphatic disposition which belongs to it, he would need to be something almost more than human to contend with the vexations. He must have one at least of the qualities that Aristotle commends in his typical "magnificent man," he must always appear to have leisure, never to be in a hurry or a flurry. It is almost as much as to say that the amateur of the gentle craft must needs be a gentleman.

Success in fishing—let us speak of fly-fishing only for the moment, as being the noblest form, the only form really worth our serious attention—does not depend only on the length of time that the fly spends in the water inviting the fish. Other things being equal, it would, no doubt, be true that the more you fished the more you would catch, but other things, especially the manner of the invitation, are apt not to be the same.

The author of "The Practical Angler," Mr. Stewart, was no doubt a very successful fisherman. A keeper, whom he reduced to desperation as a result of a day's competition in angling

with him, described a day as understood by Mr. Stewart when on the angle as "twenty-four hours of creeping and crawling." Mr. Stewart was an exceptional man. Mr. Francis Francis lays down the law with the direct imperative, "Always fish your hardest." The ordinary man cannot keep up his fishing to its hardest, cannot throw his fly to perfection, cannot invite the fish

alluringly, for many hours during the day. It is therefore better to fish for a few hours very well than for many hours very indifferently; and since but few hours are to be devoted to the business, it is well to choose those hours from the times at which fish are apt to be rising freely rather than grudgingly. As to which precisely those hours may be it were too long to consider here, for they vary with different seasons and with different latitudes.

There is no sign of a novice more convincing than an undue haste in tying on a fly without careful testing of the gut, careful consideration of the conditions, such as colour of sky and water, careful watching for the fly upon the river. Sir Herbert Maxwell maintains that fish are indifferent to colour in flies. It may be so, and his authority is high. Nevertheless, there is a distinct preference among all anglers who angle now and then, of necessity, with the ignominious worm for a good bright red worm. It may be ungrounded prejudice, but it exists, and its existence argues a belief other than that of Sir Herbert Maxwell in regard to the colour perception of fish. Is it not a point that science ought to decide for us? Is there not a



C. Reid.

A CAREFUL SELECTION.

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difference of the respective lenses in the eye that can perceive colour and the eye that can perceive it not? We do not know. We must not ask too much of science, and it may be that the power of perceiving colour resides in those subtle lines of communication between the eye and the brain rather than in any simple mechanical arrangement or construction of lenses. In any case we do not understand Sir Herbert Maxwell to deny fish the faculty of distinguishing tones or values. They know a dark fly from a light. Still less question is there that they are fastidious in the form of flies and in their size. Even the snapping salmon, that bites, as it would seem, for the fun of biting, seeing that it seems not to bite—in fresh waters be it understood—for any gratification of the stomach or the palate, even he discerns between the big fly and the little, the spring fly and the autumn, the fly for big water and the fly for small. Perhaps this is about the limit of his discernment, as it well may be, seeing that the fly is not intended to please his taste or help his nutriment; but the trout has other more serious business with the fly. With him it is a question of gastronomy. He certainly knows the blue upright from the March brown, and the May fly from either. Let us not try to impute more than his meed of science to him. Still we must credit him with something more than this. There is no question but that, in most conditions, you will catch more fish with a skilful imitation of the fly that is on the water than with any other winged or hackled lure. It behoves us, therefore, to go steadily, with carefulness, making A CAREFUL SELECTION of the fly before we start, and when we do start to fish our hardest, that is to say, our best, and to fish with diligence.

Because we say that we are not to hurry, nor to flurry, that is by no means to say that we are to lose time, to idle, to lie late a-bed. The most perfect student of the gentle art, the most accomplished, the most perfect gentleman in the leisurely, the contemplative methods that he pursued, the good Izaak Walton, was no lazy lie-a-bed. Hear his discourse: "Piscator: Good



C. Reid, Wishaw, N.B.

"I HAVE HOLD OF A GOOD FISH."

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regales his scholar with discourse at some length about the manner of fishing for the trout, first with worms of various kinds, then live bait, finally with fly, the whole most discursively treated, and adorned with quotations of poetry and legend after his inimitable manner; and then, after all this, without a word of comment or remark that they had risen at all early—indeed, at starting, Piscator's reference to brother Peter as being still in bed seems to imply that he deemed one who was not then risen a sad sluggard—there comes this sufficiently striking utterance from Piscator's mouth: "My honest scholar, it is now past five of the clock; we will fish till nine, and then go to breakfast."

Prodigious! Here was this gentleman of singular leisure, having discoursed long and pleasantly already, remarking, in the stately manner of his time, "By Jove, five o'clock already!" It is no wonder that he could find leisure if he made all his days as long as this. "Go you," Piscator adds, "to yonder sycamore tree, and hide your bottle of drink under the hollow root of it; for about that time, and in that place, we will make a brave

breakfast with a piece of powdered beef, and a radish or two that I have in my fish bag; we shall, I warrant you, make a good, honest, wholesome, hungry breakfast, and I will then give you directions for the making and using of your flies; and in the meantime there is your rod and line; and my advice is that you fish as you see me do, and let's try which can catch the first fish."

Is it not all delightful? Why can we not write about it all as charmingly now? Old Izaak Walton did not use up all pleasant words and tricks of tongue any more than all the fish or all the flies. Perhaps if we were to get up as early as he did, and live as wholesomely and think as charmingly—I am afraid that is the point that we cannot get to—we might do it. But we must be grateful to him, at least, for what he has left us.

So they go to work, PISCATOR AND THE SCHOLAR, to try, as Piscator puts it with his inimitable slyness, "which can catch the first fish." Presently Piscator cries, "Look you, scholar, you see I HAVE HOLD OF A GOOD FISH. I now see it is a trout. I pray, put that net under him, and touch not my line, for if you do, then we break all. WELL DONE, SCHOLAR, I thank you."



C. Reid, Wishaw, N.B.

"WELL DONE, SCHOLAR."

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morrow, good hostess, I see my brother Peter is still in bed. Come, give my scholar and me a morning drink and a bit of meat to breakfast; and be sure to get a dish of meat or two against supper, for we shall come home as hungry as hawks. Come, scholar, let's be going."

So off they go; and as they fare towards the river Piscator

The manner in which they are here fishing looks to me rather as if they were DAPPING than casting, but it is not quite to be ascertained. There is always a charming irony, so very gentle, about this Piscator; it is really one of his sweetest merits, that saving salt of humour. His "Well done, scholar," for helping the fish into the creel, after the challenge to try who could catch the first fish, is quite beautiful. Scholar himself does not think it is "well done" at all. He even turns a little peevish about it all, saying, "I have no fortune; sure, master, yours is a better rod and tackling than mine." On which Piscator preaches him a little homily, with a parable, on the text that we should read, though Piscator, of course, reads it far more courteously, "Bad workmen find fault with their tools."

However, in the course of the day scholar manages to catch three to Piscator's seven, but all the middle hours are engaged in endless sweet discourse on men and matters, natural history and legend, gods and little fishes, after the very heart of the contemplative man.

Incidentally I may say that I do not believe in a single ounce of those five brace of trout of which Piscator reports the catching. I believe him rather to be the father of fishing yarns, as of other piscatorial qualities in this narration, for when they have come back to the hostel Piscator remarks that they are lucky to have a dry house over their heads, "For hark! how it rains and blows," and this in addition to a shower or two during the day. Moreover, it appears that the lie-a-bed Peter and his companion have been driven by the rain to spend half the day at an ale-house playing shovel-board, and yet have caught five trout. Now who is to believe that with all this rain coming the trout would have risen so freely? But it is no discredit that we do to the good Piscator for doubting, for does not his recital, under the circumstances, put him only into so much the closer sympathy with modern anglers? And, after all, trout have no doubt been educated into a deal more cleverness than in his good old days—more's the pity.



C. Reid, Wishaw, N.B.

DAPPING.

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## RECOLLECTIONS OF STEEPLECHASING.—X

SOME very funny things used to happen during the period of which I have been writing, and although there is probably just as much dishonesty connected with the sport now, it is better wrapped up, and the instances of it do not take place so openly. Wherever money is at stake there will be people trying to get it, honestly or dishonestly, and the only thing to be done is to make the latter business as risky a one as possible. I can remember several men I have known at different times—small farmers, horse-dealers, etc.—who really

seemed to think that the only sporting way of making money in racing was on "the cross," and who would always sooner make £10 in that way than £20 honestly. I remember one of these strangely-constituted persons, a good sportsman, and honest, I believe, in every other way, who almost always had a Raven or a Swan in his stable. Whichever might be the owner of one or other of these names never had the smallest right to it, and, as a rule, was some old horse who had won a race or two somewhere. These used to run at different meetings about the country, and no one ever seemed to pay any attention to it. At last he went too far, when he ran a horse who had won several races in an event confined to maidens under a perfectly different name to his own, and at a hunt meeting in the very same country where he had been hunted all the season, and was perfectly well known to everyone. When remonstrated with, all he said was: "I'm an old man, and I've got sixty blood 'osses. How can I remember all their names and pedigrees?"

My first introduction to this worthy was at a little West Country meeting. He had a horse running which he had asked a sporting subaltern in the neighbouring garrison town to ride. When the time arrived, only one other turned up to oppose him, and that of such inferior class that it was certain to be a case of odds on. This was not at all in accordance with the views of the gentleman in question, who saw no chance of making a bit; he therefore approached his jockey as follows: "Captain, you wouldn't like to do a shunt, would you?" This, of course, resulted in the captain declining to have anything more to do with him or his horse, and telling him at the same time what he thought of him. Perfectly unabashed, he merely said, "Money I want, and money I will 'ave. I'll do it myself." And so he did, but so clumsily that he had to pass the post leaning back in his saddle and pulling his horse's head off. The yokels, who had all got their week's earnings on his horse,

would certainly have killed him if they could have caught him; but somehow or another he was smuggled into a room in the stand before they could get at him, and a couple of boards being cut out at the back, he was got out and put on to a horse before the crowd in front knew what was happening. The last I saw of him was galloping down the road for his life, pursued by a shrieking and infuriated mob.

I remember once going to a meeting in the North of England with a friend of mine who had a horse running in the principal handicap of the day. He was only afraid of one, the owner of whom was equally afraid of his. We were standing in the paddock just after the numbers had gone up, when there approached us an intimate friend of the rival owner. Sidling up mysteriously to my friend, I heard him say, in a half-whisper, "Squire, the — party is inclined to be 'ave 'andsome"; which meant that he was being asked to "stop" his own horse and stand in with the owner of the other. At that moment the betting was about even between these two, who were first and second favourites, nothing else being backed; two minutes afterwards it had become a case of odds on my friend's horse, and 4 to 1



bar one, which, of course, meant that not having succeeded in "squaring" my friend, the opposition, to make a certainty of it, had determined to "pull" their own and back their rival, who won all right, although he certainly would not have done so on his merits, as he fell after going a mile, and lost a lot of ground.

I also remember a well-known and very popular character who used to ride at most of the South Country meetings in old days, and who would always "stop" one for a friend if he was asked to do so. It was at a meeting in Surrey, some twenty years ago, that he got beaten in such an open manner that the crowd turned out and hooted him. "Fancy making such a fuss about such a little thing," he said to me afterwards in the most aggrieved tone. It does not do to be too clever, however, and I have known more than one case of the "Engineer hoist with his own petard." It was thus with a West Country jockey, who was

riding in the seventies, and who on one occasion devised the scheme of taking some of the leads out of his saddle-cloth, and having them slipped into his boot as he was walking back to weigh in. It all went all right up to a certain point. He won his race, and pulling up a long way past the post his accomplice slipped the leads into the leg of one boot as he was walking back to the paddock beside him. Unfortunately, however, an overzealous friend, who knew the game, and had betted accordingly, walked back on the other side of his horse, and as he did so, to make quite certain, slipped another lead into his other boot. The result was that he was overweight and lost the race. This is a true story, and the beauty of it is that he would certainly have won his race had he carried his proper weight. It was the anxiety to make quite certain that led to so unfortunate a result.

OUTPOST.



#### CHAPTER X.

FACIT INDIGNATIO VERSUM.

I WAS speechless with anger and dismay, but—the Lord be praised—my wits did not desert me. Indeed, after a short pause, I begged him to accept my congratulations. "For," said I, with a sneer—he marked, possibly, a tremor in my voice—"for surely, señor, even you must confess that the best and most accomplished of men will receive more at the hands of the señorita Estrada than he will give."

His eyes sparkled with rage, as he nodded curtly in reply.

"A week ago," I continued, "there was no mention of this marriage."

"Pardon me, señor, you are mistaken. Our plans were not then made public. I deprecate undue haste as much as any man, but the times are such that ceremony must courtesy to convenience. Castro has marched south. I shall take no part in this quarrel, because my cousin Juan is on the other side, and I am not a Californian. The señorita Estrada needs a protector."

"She does," said I.

Here we parted, and I rode straight to the plaza, and dismounting, walked to Alvarado's house. There I learned that His Excellency was seriously ill and a-bed. However, he consented to see me, and a minute later I entered a very comfortable room and saluted my chief. I asked but coldly after his health, for I was raging inwardly, being convinced that I had been sent upon a fool's errand. He told me that he had succumbed to a sharp attack of inflammatory rheumatism upon the afternoon of the day I had left Monterey. Then he read the letters I delivered.

"Tell me, frankly, what you think," he said.

"I am thinking, señor, that a marriage between Castañeda and the señorita Estrada is an affair that stains the honour of her kinsmen. The bride loathes the groom."

If I expected an outburst of anger I was disappointed.

"What has that to do with you, my friend?"

"Nothing," I stammered, like a green boy, "nothing, your Excellency."

Then, scarlet in the face, I told him in substance what had passed between Vallejo and me, and, upon his again demanding my opinion, pronounced the comandante a diplomatist, biding the issue of a quarrel he refused to make his own.

"But there is more behind this, no?" muttered Alvarado, uneasily. "They say in your language that lookers-on see most of the game. My uncle till now has been my active ally. He has had his finger in every pie. Why does he call himself a ranchero?"

His keen eyes were on mine; they were steady as beacon fires, although his lips were twitching with pain.

"Come and see me to-morrow; and look you, my friend, do not meddle in affairs that concern others alone. I have work for you to do. Dios! I rejoice that you are in no woman's mesh. Think of your handsome friend—tied hand and foot to a wife's petticoat."

His voice had a cold ironical note in it. The gossips vowed that His Excellency left his fiancée, the lovely Martino Castro, to sigh by herself upon her father's rancho. Certainly he regarded love as something apart from and immeasurably below the duties and responsibilities of his position; and in this, as I now know,

and in this alone, he was wanting in a sense of the true proportion of things.

"I thank your Excellency for your advice," said I, pausing on the threshold.

He laughed lightly.

"Buena! You English have it that advice is given and not taken. That is not really so; advice is generally taken. We are all influenced by the opinions of others; and that, señor, is the reason why I so seldom give—advice. Adios, and thank you for your services."

I walked away convinced that my patron was a masterful man, and yet—strange to say—I liked him the better, because he was stronger than I. None the less, John Charity determined to meddle most strenuously in an affair that he held to concern him more intimately than aught else on earth.

As I crossed to Larkin's house I saw that the town was *en fête*. Flags and banners hung from the windows; booths lined the plaza and adjoining streets; on all sides I heard the twanging of guitars and the squeaking of fiddles; dancing, gambling, and drinking claimed the attention of the gay Montereyenos.

As soon as supper was over I walked up the hill to the Casa Estrada with the intention of delivering Vallejo's letters, and if possible exchanging a word in private with Magdalena. Why had she, so full of fire and spirit, submitted tamely to these outrageous proceedings? Had she a plan? And if so—what was it?

At the adobe I found a gay company assembled to inspect the trousseau of the bride and the *donas* of the groom. Although the time had been short, the good Tia Maria Luisa had proved equal to the occasion. The exquisite linens and embroideries had lain for months in the handsome baules—chests lined with camphor-wood and covered with red leather, brass-mounted, studded with brass nails, and gay with painted flowers—and Castañeda during his last visit to Mexico had bought the *donas*, a pearl necklace, some filmy, fairy-like under-garments, lace, fans, a mantilla, and a pair of diamond rings for his wife's pink ears. These were spread out before the envious eyes of señoras and señoritas.

"*Santisima!*" said one pretty girl; "but our Magdalena must be a happy woman to-night."

"She laughs, and laughs, and laughs," said another. "Ay! she is happy, of course."

Pushing my way through the crowd, I presented my letters to Estrada and Tia Maria Luisa. Magdalena was standing by Don Narciso, and as her glance met mine she quivered and let fall her heavy lids. When she raised them languidly, for my life I could not interpret the message of her eyes. She stepped forward and greeted me with a smile, but the hand she placed in mine was cold as a stone. Castañeda, who was near, had doubtless told her of my return, and he watched us narrowly as we exchanged a half-dozen conventional phrases. I dared not lower my voice, but I pressed her hand to my lips and felt the muscles of her slim fingers harden beneath the soft, velvety skin.

Then in a cold, courteous voice, Don Narciso thanked me for bringing him his kinsman's letters, and begged me to be

present at the morrow's ceremony in the church at Carmelo. I bowed, and turned to Tia Maria Luisa.

"Your friends have gone," said she, dolefully. "*Ay de mi!* but I am sorry. The Señor Valencia has left me nothing but a pot of dulces as sweet as himself! *Que desgracia!* But his wife! *Madre de Dios!* it is well that the lovely lady has taken her white skin to Santa Barbara. The men had begun to quarrel for her smiles; and, look you," her voice sank to a whisper mellow as mayonnaise, "look you, señor, even our bridegroom was not proof against her charms. Oh, you men, you men!"

"Señora," said I, "I was a saint till I came to Monterey, and now I am a sinner. Whose fault is that?"

"*Tate tate!* You a saint! *Hé, hé!* A likely story. No man was ever a saint till he was dead—*se Dios me perdona!*"

God knows I jested with a sore heart, waiting and watching for a chance to speak to Magdalena. I was sure that she would sleep with Tia Maria upon the eve of her wedding. Custom demanded it; and the house would be crammed with friends and relations. I dared not approach her window at night. I knew of no soubrette who might be entrusted with a letter. In short, I was where many another man has been before me—in a blind alley of perplexity, unwilling to retreat, unable to advance.

I took pleasure, however, in watching the face of Castañeda. The man was ill at ease, at a loss to account for Magdalena's gaiety. Her smiles bred frowns, and more than once she rallied him upon his dismal countenance. Others remarked his sour looks, and whispered together in corners, murmuring behind their fans. 'Twas plain the Mexican found little favour in the eyes of the Montereyenos.

Soto presently engaged me in talk, and I said, in answer to a question, that I was enjoying myself vastly well, and looking forward to the morrow's function.

"I suppose, señor, that none will see the bride till she leaves this house upon her father's arm—no outsiders, I mean? That is our custom."

"And ours also."

He chattered away, describing the details of a Californian wedding, but eyeing me, I fancied, maliciously, as if he knew that I was in torment. Then the devil prompted him to allude to my bout with sabres at the cuartel.

"You handle the fleuret better than the sword," said he.

As he spoke I saw my way clear. Why, in the name of the Sphinx, had I overlooked such a simple solution of the problem? Being essentially a man of peace, I had not considered the propriety of killing the Mexican, although I had come to the conclusion that the world could spare him. He was no coward; he believed himself to be my superior in the use of the sabre; in a word, he would not shrink from the ordeal of combat. It was simple as the game of beggar-my-neighbour. Before midnight some pretext could be found for a quarrel; we would meet at dawn; and a funeral would give the Montereyenos almost as much entertainment as a wedding. I laughed as I reflected that Soto, Castañeda's toady and parasite, had given me my cue.

"You are in high spirits," he sneered.

"I was thinking about that queer flicking cut of your friend's. Faith! it was too much for me. Would he teach me the trick, señor?"

"Perhaps," said Soto, with his evil smile.

"Three times he had me. It piqued me, señor; I confess it; but, as you say, I can handle the foil better than the sabre."

Till now I had held aloof from Magdalena, not wishing to arouse suspicion by my attentions, for the cold eye of Don Narciso was ever on me, and the dueña doubtless had her instructions. Despite appearances, I had absolute trust in Magdalena. From the moment I had felt her cold hand tighten convulsively in mine I knew that she was true to me, that her love was stronger than ever. But I was by no means so certain that custom might not drive a Spanish woman—little more than a child—to the arms of another. Policy now constrained me to play a bolder game. So I joined the group at the other end of the sala, and flung a phrase at Castañeda.

"Señor," said I, with my best bow, "you are thinking, doubtless, that marriage is a more serious thing for a man than for a woman."

How he scowled as I grinned in his handsome face.

"And you, señorita," I continued, glibly, turning to Magdalena; "would it be an impertinence to ask what thoughts are chasing themselves so merrily through your beautiful head? I am one of those who believe that experience should be borrowed, not bought. You—"

"I am making the most of the passing hour, señor," she replied gaily. "Lent is coming, no? But my thoughts! Ay! you must guess those for yourself."

The others laughed, but looked queerly at the sour-faced groom.

"Don Santiago," said I, impudently, "is naturally distraught with anxiety. The cup is at his lips; he is thirsty; but he must wait till to-morrow."

Magdalena drew together her delicate brows. I perceived that she thought me indiscreet. Yet her lovely eyes were sparkling with malice.

"Ay, ay!" exclaimed a pretty girl. "To-morrow never comes, señor. You know what '*mañana*' means with us. *Huy!* Don Santiago need not fear. It is too late now for him to count the cost."

"There was a story once—" I began.

"A story, a story," they clapped their hands. "*Que alegría!* The señor Ingles will tell us a story."

"You may know it already," said I, smiling. "I would not tell it, only the circumstances are so entirely different in this case. 'Tis a story writ in verse—the love-story of young Lochinvar and the lovely Ellen."

"The story of Elena! For the love of the saints, señor, tell us the story of Elena."

"Elena," said I, slowly, with my eyes on the Mexican, "was the rich and beautiful daughter of a Scotch ranchero. Lochinvar was young, handsome, and poor, I suspect, although we are not told so. Elena's father had betrothed her to a man she hated, for there were bitter factions in those days between the North and the South, and this man would take no part in them. He was a laggard in love and a dastard in war."

Those present knew that Castañeda had declined to draw his sword against the *abajenos*. He grew livid with rage as I continued, but said not a word. Some of the men smiled; the women paled; and Magdalena flushed scarlet.

"Elena," I said, softly, "loved Lochinvar; but the day of her wedding was set, and he was not within call. When he heard of the marriage he was far away. He had to swim rivers to get to her side. That reminds me the straits of Carquinas are cold waters. Well, Lochinvar arrived in time for the wedding—just in time, no more. They danced at those Scotch weddings as you dance here in Alta California. And they were all famous riders, like you, señores. And, of course, such a caballero as Lochinvar had a splendid horse, the finest in the country."

They listened in breathless silence.

"Lochinvar entered the house of the bride's father, and left his horse outside, as you do, señores. Then he asked the lovely Elena for one dance, which could not well be refused. He was gay and debonair, this Scottish caballero, but the other, the laggard and dastard, stood apart frowning, and the old father, you may be sure, was fuming also. As they danced, Lochinvar whispered one word in the pink ear of Elena. Only one, señoritas."

"*Santisima!*" murmured the pretty girl at my side; "as if one word was not enough."

"Yes, one word, and as they neared the door she saw that his horse stood there, champing his bit, full of fire and strength. In a moment—p-s-s-s-s-st!—they were outside the hall, in another Lochinvar had swung the lady to the saddle and mounted also. Before the astonished guests could stir from their seats they were off and away."

"*Madre de Dios!*" ejaculated the little señorita, who did not understand the significance of my story. "He was a true caballero, that one! *Ojala!* Had he Spanish blood in his veins, no?"

"Were they pursued and caught?" said Magdalena, calmly.

"They were pursued, but not caught," said I.

"Ay, ay!" cried the little one; "they would have been caught here—sure. The bridegroom would have taken a caponera."

"And what, señor," said Magdalena to me, "would the poor caballero have done in that case?"

"Probably," said I, "he would have killed his rival at the very steps of the altar, if need be. Rest assured that the wrong man would never have married the lovely Elena. And now, señorita, I will bid you good-night."

I bowed to the company assembled, and took my leave. If I had not misread the expression upon Castañeda's face, I would surely have company before I reached my lodging.

(To be continued.)

## CLIFF FOXES.

IN one of the best of the late George Whyte Melville's drinking or hunting songs he proposes a toast:

"Here's to the fox  
In his earth beneath the rocks."

And the "thief of the world" shown in the accompanying picture would seem to have his habitat in these very places. One hardly knows whether Mr. Whyte Melville, who was a good sportsman, though never a hard rider, meant especially to select the fox that has his home in stony places as the subject of the toast, to give him a special position on the toast list above all foxes living in softer surroundings, or whether the phrase "in his earth beneath the rocks" was merely an appropriate adornment, nicely fitting the fox both in rhythm and also, as it appeared in this context, in metre, just as the great Agamemnon, and one or two more, constantly appear in the "*Iliad*" with the Anax Andron tacked to them. Of course we all, even the fox



"in his earth beneath the rocks," know that Mr. Gladstone invented a very much more subtle and infinitely more ingenious account of the Anax Andron description; but while it is an account that does infinite credit to his faith in the inventions of that ingenuity, it does not find with Greek scholars the credence that its subtlety deserves.

But whether or no Mr. Whyte Melville spoke of the fox that lives in the rocks as a special member of its race, or referred to the race generally, it is in any case very certain that the hill and cliff foxes are exceptional. Down in Devonshire—not the best of hunting counties, but a county in which hunting keeps some of its best characteristics, such as the friendliness between classes and really sporting qualities, that it has lost in some of the counties better adapted to steeplechase riding—here, where there is from any point of the large county a possibility that a fox may lead you to the cliffs, and where hounds can be closely watched at their work, so that qualities both of hound and fox can be shrewdly judged, here we used to have the most enormous respect for the cliff foxes. They were ever noted to be more swift and possessed of greater staying power than any others; some said they were even more cunning, such is the virtue of a nip of salt in the air. There was one old fellow in particular whom all the hunt knew well. He had a very big white tag to his brush, and his favourite haunt, it would seem, was one particular covert, for there, whenever we drew it, we never failed to find him. It had gone so far that we were almost inclined to look upon him as a warrantable stag harboured in, so that if any other fox than he had come from that covert we should have felt inclined, I think, to whip off the hounds and turn them in again to find our big white-tagged old friend. And every time that he was turned out he took the same bee-line, taking the same fields and even the same gaps every year for his "earth beneath the rocks," or rather in the cliffs that looked out on the Atlantic. Once there he was safe as in a castle; and he had his revenge for all his huntings by the hounds that would now and again dash over the cliffs in too eager pursuit, and be picked up with broken bones on the rocks below. We never quite knew where that old fellow's earth was, nor how he managed to descend the precipitous cliff to it. In our boyhood's days we read a tale of an old cliff fox



C. Reid, Wishaw, N.B.

## STEALING HOME AT DAWN.

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who used to cheat the hounds by leaning over the beetling edge, seizing a projecting root with his teeth, and so swinging himself to a narrow path that led to his earth. And the horrid story ran that a brute of a man who had observed this cut the root half away, and the next time the fox seized it, it broke with him and let him be dashed to pieces far below.

Let us hope that tale was a fiction. We invented fictions for the manner in which our old friend with the big white tag went to his cliff home, but probably it was by the skilful and cat-like use of his cunning old pads merely. And then one day he was pulled down, the gallant old fellow, going straight for the same point, pulled down while going the best pace his old limbs would bear him; and not one of the hunt but felt a pang when they knew this good old friend was gone. We noticed when he went away from covert that he was greyer than of yore and showed signs of age. In a decorous and a solemn silence that night we drank a bumper to

"— the fox

In his earth beneath the rocks,"

really saddened by the thought that he was in that earth no more, as he had been in other years when we had drunk, with noisy acclaim, his health to the same toast, and that he would never lead us that well-known line again.

## COUNTRY GOSSIPS.—III.



W. Abrey.

## SHEEP-SHEARING.

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A NOTABLE characteristic of the country-folk among whom my lot is cast is what the Scotch would call their "fecklessness," their want of enterprise in neglecting new methods and new information on matters that would seem to be the first concerns of their daily lives.

Now one would imagine that to people living in the country, living an out of door life, engaged for the most part in some agricultural pursuit, a factor of prime importance to their welfare would be the weather.

Any means that could aid them in conjecturing what the weather was likely to be in the immediate future, and conforming their farming operations, such as hay-cutting or HARVESTING, or seeding or SHEEP-SHEARING, accordingly, it would seem inconceivable that they should neglect. And yet in this so obviously important question they appear to take no interest whatsoever. One might think it as immaterial to them as to the life of a City clerk.

Is this "fecklessness" then to be regarded as a national characteristic, and are we to trace to a like source some

of the manifold disasters that have befallen our brave soldiers in South Africa? This is a question for other and wiser than country gossips. But to return to the weather wisdom, that were, perhaps, more accurately named the weather foolishness, of our country-folk, it is needful, at least, to give them credit for making no pretensions. Few of them care even to pose as weather prophets, and there is scarcely a barometer to be found in all the farm-houses of the country-side. And this is the more singular, because for the one weather-glass—literally weather-glass, for it is made of an oil flask inverted into a water-bottle on the well-known plan—they profess great admiration and respect. But it never occurs to any of them to make such another for themselves, though neither oil flasks nor bottles are beyond their stores. The credit that they give "Stillman and his glass" is surprising, one of them going so far as to tell me that "I've never known 'im wrong." "Never" is a big word, and you cannot easily go beyond it; but for all their respect for the glass, they always speak of "Stillman and his glass" as of some joint stock business, whose members you could not dissociate. It has never occurred to any of them, I think, that the glass could be of equal value in any other man's keeping, or with any other man's interpretation, so used have they grown to the association. The man Stillman, to do him all justice, is a wonderful prophet of the weather, so far as I have been able to gauge his capacities, apart from his glass; so perhaps there may be something, after all, in the theory that the country people seem implicitly to hold about it and him. I remember well his assuring me that rain was coming on a serene day, when I could see no token of such a change in the sky, and when, moreover, my own aneroid, and, I presume, his water-glass also, were rising. I mentioned the fact to him that the barometer was on the ascent. "Yes," he said; "but it looks just right for rain."

He did not seem to be able, or, at least, to think it worth while, to diagnose the conditions further; but, surely enough, within a few hours it was raining hard, in the barometer's despite.

The biggest thing in the way of diagnosis that I ever heard him venture on was: "You get it like this, and the wind goes round to the south-east, and there it is—rain!"

There is something so final and complete about this that you feel it is impossible to ask more. To admit that you did not see that, granted such conditions, "there it is—rain!" would seem in this man's presence to be as much as confessing that you could not see the nose before your face. But he is a very marked exception to the majority of his class, whose general indifference and ignorance about the weather is no less astonishing than their uninterested acquiescence in his curiously exact forecasting of it.



W. Abrey.

## READY FOR CARRYING.

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If the nation cannot afford to keep up the Ben Nevis Observatory, it should adopt Stillman and his glass as an institution instead.

Going about among these poor in their cottages one is often moved to covetousness by the china and occasional fine bits of old furniture that ornament their dwellings. There is one old lady whose possessions specially interest me, for I can never resist the thought that I may one day be their owner, of course for a fair price paid to the legatees. The legatee-in-chief, as I may suspect, is likely to be the little girl sitting on the caravan steps, where she has no manner of right to be, playing with the donkey. She does not belong to the caravan folk at all, unless I am mistaken in her identity. She is grand-niece to the old lady in question, whose life is really worthy of a place in chronicles of saints of labour.

"I began my life," she said, "going out to service in a farmhouse. It wasn't the luxury then of these days, not your wax candles and your oil lamps. All the light we used to have was the rushlights we used to dip in the sheep's fat, and then when the dark came we just used to sit around with one light on the table till it was time to go to bed. If we'd only had more light those evenings, I sometimes think I might p'raps have learnt to read. It's that as I regret most, the want of edification. Oh! I've done well in my life. I've worked hard all my days, and from the farmhouse I went on into service with a gentlefolk's fam'ly, and afterwards I was housekeeper to a bachelor gentleman as died and left me all the chaney and the burry." The "burry," I may say, is a beautiful old oak bureau—a treasure; and the china is worthy of kings' treasures, no less. "And all the time I was saving money till I could buy myself this house, where I've been ever since, and shall be till I'm took. But the want of edification, that's the worst of it. Why, there, when I gets the paper it'll take me a day to spell out a column like, and there's 'Liza'—the young lady of the caravan steps—'she'll just come in and read it right off as peart as can be. That's what the schooling does. There never was anything like that in my time. That's the only thing as I regret, and shall till I'm took. What do you think of this dress?"

The question was flung with such abruptness that I failed to catch its connection with what had gone before. I said that I thought it was a very nice dress—a decent linsey, a trifle worn.

"It's dreadful shabby, I'm afraid, and the cuffs are gone that rusty brown. I couldn't bear for the Almighty to think I look shabby when I'm took."

"But I do not think that you'll appear before Him like that," I said.



C. Reid, Wishaw, N.B.

## HARVESTING OATS.

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"Ah, yes, my dear," she said, "that's just it! You're young; you don't know—you don't understand. I'm old, and I know. I know that we shall appear before Him just as we are, whatever we may be wearing; you in that sailor-hat, and me— Well, I've been a hard-working woman and an honest woman all my life, and I could not bear to think that I should look shabby before the Almighty when I'm took."

"But He will know," I said, "how hard you have worked all your life, however you look."

"Yes," she said, with a sigh of half-hearted resignation; "but He might forget."

If it were not all so touchingly simple it might seem irreverent; but there is no suspicion of that in the way the poor folk say these things. The struggle and the confusion in this old lady's mind were very curious, as revealed to me in further talk. She hardly thought it worth while to buy a new dress, because she expected to be "took" so soon, but at the same time could not bear the thought of appearing in shabby raiment at the great judgment bar.

The case presented difficulties too deep for me to venture on advice. For the sake of the probable legatee ON THE CARAVAN STEPS I inclined to the view that the old dress would be adequate.

(To be continued.)

## A BASKET . . . OF TROUT.

"WILL ye be tryin' for a trout in the mornin', Mister Jack?" asked Keiley, as we came to the little stone bridge over the stream.

"Keiley," said I, with dignity, "did you ever hear of *crambo repetita*?"

"Niver, Mister Jack. What is ut at all? Is ut some kind iv a fish ye've been failin' to catch in furrin parts?"

"It is not an animal, Keiley, but a vegetable, and an expression into the bargain much used by the ancient Romans—"God rest their souls!" I heard him mutter, for Keiley is a good Catholic—"and betokens a stale joke. It grieves me to find that your mind is losing what the poet calls its freshness and bloom. You've had six months to think of something new to play off on me."

For I knew the stream well. It was cram full of trout—doesn't it flow from the lake at the foot of Slieve-na-Man, where Keiley always excuses himself for drinking neat whisky by declaring "Ye can't get a dhrop iv water widout a fish in it"—but it is so narrow and its banks are so thickly overgrown that the wielding of a rod would have baffled the Great Master himself.

"Och, mebbe it's newer than ye think," retorted Keiley, as he leaned with an air of suppressed mystery against the parapet of the bridge and looked down at the water. "Faith, it's an iligant divarsion besides feedin' the disarvin' poor between this an' Clonmel."

"Out with it then, man," I exclaimed, scratching a match on a stone to light a cigarette. "Don't injure your delicate constitution by trying to keep a secret."

"Well, the way iv ut was this. Thank ye, Mister Jack, I'll take wan, though it's not much I can make iv them little poles. Last Monday was a fortnight an' I was standin' just about where yez are now, Mister Jack, and watching a big trout—be the same token he wasn't much short of a crokindile—here in under the bridge, an' wishin' I cud lay houl't iv 'im be the tail, when I cot sight of ould Larry comin' along wid the basket for the thirty linen at the big house. 'Twas fair day Monday, an' Larry'd been havin' a dhrop an' over iv fair whisky—ye remimber, Mister Jack, how ut cot yer throat the first toime ye tasted ut?"

I nodded, for the mere recollection of the stuff took away my breath.

"Well, on came ould Larry, findin' the gravel walk a deal too narra, an' just whin he got forinist the place there where the stones is broke down, he gev the devil's own lurch an' over he wint basket an' all into the strame. Faith, I nearly fell in meself wid laughin' at 'im. Well, I fished 'im out—an' 'tis sober as a policeman he was thin—an' whin I picked up the basket—'twas lyin' wid the lid open up strame—shure if there wasn't a trout in ut as long as the len'th iv the dhlink Larry'd been havin'. 'Twas that gev me the notion, an' if ye'll come down here in the mornin' before yer breakfast, Mister Jack, ye'll catch as many fish as the twelve Apos'els."

The dew still lay heavy in the shadows of the trees as I made my way next morning towards the bridge to take a hand in the "iligant divarsion" and aid in providing for the deserving poor of the district. I found Keiley sitting on the parapet with the shortest and blackest of clays between his teeth, and lazily swearing at two small boys from the village, who were cutting long leafy switches from a willow. His feet were planted on a large square basket, which I judged to be the destined instrument of destruction.

"The top iv the mornin', Mister Jack," was his greeting. "May I make so bould as to ask to strip off them dandy shoos an' stockin's? 'Tis yer mother wud niver forgive me if I was the cause iv yer takin' yer death iv could."

"Get out!" said I, politely, proceeding at the same time to obey his injunction, for I knew him well enough to be sure that if any work was to be done, it would have to be done by someone else. Keiley has the failing which



C. Reid, Wishaw, N.B.

### ON THE CARAVAN STEPS.

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climato'ogists are fond of attributing to the enervating properties of the Irish atmosphere.

The boys had by this time gone some distance up the stream, and were standing, switches in hand, on the bank, with one watchful eye on the water and the other on Keiley.

"We'll try our first cast above the bridge here, Mister Jack. If ye'll step gently down into the water, I'll instruct ye from the shore."

I waded into the middle of the narrow stream, and Keiley handed me the basket.

"Open the tu lids sideways up strame so as to block the coorse, and don't try for to catch the fish at all. Soft and aisy wid them, Mister Jack, an' they'll come to yez in their own accord. Now, ye gossoons, in ye go, an' shout like the devil."

They did, and, moreover, began to beat the water with their switches, displaying an energy which, if devoted to more serious pursuits, would have led to ultimate emolument and fame.

In a moment the stream ahead of me was full of fleeing trout, big, little, and middle-sized. I saw them heading into the basket—felt them whisking over my feet, and as Keiley shouted: "Lift, Mister Jack, lift for the love iv Hlevin!" I swung the basket with a mighty effort on the bank, and out tumbled eleven palpating trout.

"Faith 'tis not a bad haul for a beginner," said the philosopher. "We'll try our luck below bridge in a minute or tu whin the disturbance has subsided."

So I lit a cigarette and smoked while Keiley delivered a homily to the gossoons on the vices of idleness and improvidence, drawing terrifying analogies between the basket that yawned for the trout and the pit that yawned for evil-doers. There was a twinkle in his eye as he hinted that the devil was of Saxon origin.

When both my cigarette and the homily were finished, I settled down for another haul below the bridge, while the boys set to their wild work above it. But this time there was no rush of fish, though one or two stragglers flashed past me disdainfully under the lee of the bank.

"What's come to the trout, bhoys?" shouted Keiley.

"Shure they're all in under the bridge."

"Af'er them, thin; is ut the dark ye're afraid iv?"

And the boys nerved themselves for a crisis and went whooping under the stonework.

"Where's Micky?" asked Keiley, as only one of them emerged.

"'Tis here I am," came back a hollow voice; "there's a trout in here wid a crookit tail an' as fierce as a shark. Whurroo! he the mortal, there he goes!"

And at the word I saw a three-pounder coming down for all he was worth by the right bank. I lost my head, and, forgetful of all Keiley's admonitions, made a wild plunge with the basket. The brave beast doubled, dodged, and with an impudent whisk of his crooked tail shot past my left ankle like a flash.

"Bad scan to yez both," exclaimed Keiley, losing all sense of decorum, "there goes our mornin's luck to ould nick."

But he proved, like a certain eminent politician, a false prophet. I persevered despite his despondent predictions, and at the end of another half-hour we had caught three dozen fish of the finest, and were content with the spoils.

"What do ye think iv yer *crambo repetitias* now, Mister Jack?" asked Keiley, as, restored to his normal good humour, he strung the fish on a line.

"I apologise, Keiley," I said, "and withdraw the expression."

W. HALDANE PORTER.

## Our Portrait Illustration.

THE MARCHIONESS OF GRANBY, who was married to the Marquess of Granby, the Duke of Rutland's eldest son, in 1882, is the daughter of the late Colonel the Hon. Charles Hugh Lindsay, C.B. She has four children, the eldest of whom is Lord Roos of Belvoir. Lady Granby is in the front rank of amateur artists, and a volume of drawings of well-known people by her has only lately been published.



**M**ORE interesting for its great memories than for its character as a house, or for the gracious scenes of the gardens and parks that surround it, is Hampden House in Buckinghamshire. It is easy to see that the patrimony of the great Englishman has undergone many changes since his time, for it bears the conspicuous marks of a later taste, embodying some classic features in combination with a poor attempt at the Gothic, such as might date from the reign of Queen Anne. In John Hampden's days it was a Tudor mansion, invested with all the character which we associate with those spacious times. Here the constitutional Englishman, born in London in 1594, was brought up. He looked across the level meadows, where now those majestic cedars cast their shade, with a clear view to the constitution of his country, girding himself for that conflict out of which the existing relations of the Crown and the nation have grown. Hampden had no distaste for monarchy in itself. Rather he was anxious to bring about an agreement between the King and the Parliament, and perhaps those words which have been attributed to him represent well his view: "May that man and his posterity perish that will not deny himself in the greatest part of his fortune rather than

the King shall want, to make him both potent and beloved at home, and terrible to his enemies abroad, if he will be pleased to leave those evil counsels about him, and take the wholesome advice of his great counsel, the Parliament."

When Hampden could retire from the toils of the Senate he came to his Buckinghamshire home to seek scholarly leisure, to enjoy the society of his many friends, and to take part in the rural occupations and the field sports of the time. Indeed, John Hampden loved the country, and had no taste for the intrigues of the Court. Looking back upon his action in regard to Ship Money, we cannot but see that it was unfortunate he should have had to raise a constitutional issue where the security of the country was involved in the measure he sought to overthrow. These are questions not well suited, it may be, to these pages, or to the present purpose, but it is impossible to think of Hampden House without remembering the life-work of its great possessor. Here he lingered when his mother would have made him win his fortune in the Courtly sphere. "Tell him to come to Court now," she wrote in 1620, "for there is a multitude of lords a-making," for she was, she said, ambitious for the honour of her son. Hither came John Hampden after the dissolution of the







GARDENS OLD AND NEW.—HAMPDEN HOUSE: THE ENTRANCE FRONT.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

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THE SOUTH GARDEN.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

Parliament in 1628. Here he lost and mourned the death of his first wife, Elizabeth, the daughter of William Symeon, whose monument, with his beautiful epitaph upon her, may still be seen in the church close to the house at Great Hampden.

The mansion, now approached by a splendid avenue of old beech trees, and shadowed by superb cedars, had a predecessor, it is said, in the days of John, and there is even now an apartment on the north-west front known as King John's room. The place was the ancestral seat of the Hampdens. John Hampden's grandfather, Griffith Hampden, welcomed Queen Elizabeth on one memorable occasion, and made great preparations for her

coming, almost rebuilding his house, it is said, for her reception. A full-length portrait of the Queen is now in the room she occupied, though undoubtedly the bed is of much later date. It was in the house thus reconstructed by his grandfather that John Hampden lived, and he must often have passed, in that fine park diversified with oak-covered knolls, through what is still called the Queen's Gap, which was cut to make an entrance for Elizabeth. His father, who married the daughter of Sir Henry Cromwell of Hinchinbrook, had probably changed the place very little. The son was extremely popular in the country, and many of his neighbours were his kinsmen and friends. He was

representing Grampound at the time when his mother urged his attendance at Court; in 1626 he was member for Wendover, and in 1640 he represented the county. When he resisted the forced loan of 1627, he said, with true patriotism, "I could be content to lend, but fear to draw on myself that curse in Magna Charta, which should be read twice a year against those who infringe it"; but his protest won for him so close an imprisonment in the Gate House "that he never afterwards did look like the same man he was before."

His temper and sturdy quality stood out afresh when he resisted the demand for Ship Money, and his keen intelligence, ripe learning, and hearty spirit made him the idol of the Parliament men. Upon its becoming known in Buckinghamshire that it was intended to arrest him, some 4,000 gentlemen and freeholders of the county rode up to London to support and vindicate their member. When the time came for active resistance



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KING DAVID'S GARDEN.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



they flocked about him, and he was very busy in mustering fighting men, and greatly distinguished himself by his activity, in the early part of the war, in seizing the King's Commissioners of Array, occupying Oxford, and defeating the Cavaliers in many skirmishes. It was on June 18th, 1643, at Chalgrove Field, that, in endeavouring to prevent the retreat of a body of cavalry who had made a sally from Oxford, he received his death wound, and rode off the field before the action was over, "which he never used to do," with his head bent down and his hands resting upon the pommel of his saddle. His death was a great blow and a dark omen for the cause of the Parliament at that time. At his funeral as many soldiers as could be spared from the neighbouring army quarters brought his body to be buried in the church, and we can still picture the scene as they marched up from the house with arms reversed, with muffled drums, and with heads uncovered chanting the 90th Psalm for him whose days were ended "as it were a tale that is told," and returning as they sang the 43rd Psalm, leaving their dead chief behind. "Never were heard such piteous cries at the death of one man as at Master Hampden's," says one old writer, and it adds a little to the character of the event to read that Hampden received his wound in the very field where, according to the Cavalier author of "Mercurius Aulicus," he first mustered his men.

These are the memories raised by a visit to Hampden



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THE EAST FRONT.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

House. Within the house are many relics and portraits associating the place more closely with John Hampden and his descendants, and the church, which is visible through the trees, has many monuments of his kindred. We often find that an old house is closely neighboured by a church, and such is the case at the Earl of Buckinghamshire's seat. The Earl is descended in the female line from the great patriot, and all the associations of Hampden House are carefully preserved. The surroundings have, however, greatly changed since John Hampden's time. That pleasant garden on the south side, with its stretch of level lawn and its flower beds, is not such as he beheld. We imagine



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THE CEDARS AND PASTURES.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

chat in his time there were well-cut hedges of yew, alleys where he could walk in retirement, a sundial, perhaps, and generally the formal character that belonged to the gardens of the time. The Welsh associations of the family have led to a space on the south side being known as King David's Garden. Now, shadowed by magnificent foliage, it is choicely adorned, and in every respect beautiful, with the richness and gaiety conferred by the presence of a world of flowers. In Hampden's time the country was well wooded, and some of the existing trees are now of great age. The beeches are particularly fine, and the cedars of later date are really glorious. The effect, as we look out from under their solemn shade across the level sunlit meadows, is peculiarly striking and beautiful. The pictures indicate sufficiently well what are the characteristic features of Hampden House. Enough has been said to show that it is a remarkable mansion, extremely attractive by reason of its great associations, and for much that is interesting in itself and in the beautiful park and gardens that adorn it so well.



A NEW book by Norma Lorimer, the author of "Josiah's Wife," is the kind of thing to which many of the readers of that work will look with eager anticipation. "Mirry-Ann," published by Messrs. Methuen, is such a book, and, although the beginning is disappointing in more ways than one, it is well worth reading. Most earnestly would I say to the general reader that having begun with this volume, it is quite worth while to persevere. The



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HAMPDEN HOUSE: THE GARDEN ENTRANCE. "COUNTRY LIFE."

opening chapter, to be frank, is tiresome and a little vulgar, and the dialogue between the squire and his sister concerning the position of Mirry-Ann contains expressions which even in a colloquial age are seldom found in the mouths of squires or their sisters. "Great scissors!" is really not the kind of expression which young men of the day use to their sisters, nor do sisters say, "It doesn't pay, chum dear, to show your feelings if you are a woman. Blue eyes are such spooney things: they always give a girl away." On the other hand, once you have got fairly into the story it runs vigorously enough. Mirry-Ann, or Marion, is a girl of uncertain parentage and remarkable beauty, and of strong religious feeling. The squire, who is a manly young fellow enough, falls in love with her. So does his friend Dick Schofield, to whom Mirry-Ann is most inclined; but Mirry-Ann herself, being a high-minded girl, is determined that she will marry nobody until she is assured of her legitimacy. She discovers that her mother had been clandestinely married to the squire's father, and that discovery once made, events follow one another thick and fast. The house in which she lives is burnt. John Thomas, a sturdy fisherman, and her devoted but despairing lover, rescues the papers from the burning house at the risk of his life. In doing so he loses his sight, and Mirry-Ann makes up her mind to marry him. Thereupon follows this very touching scene between Mirry-Ann and her lover Schofield:

"My uncle will never get over this shock," she replied; "don't make my task harder than I can bear."

"Dear heart," he said, with a sweet tenderness in his voice that reduced the girl to physical submission, "what new task?"

"Mirry-Ann turned her head to where John Thomas lay, and pointed to him with her eloquent eyes.

"I am going to marry John Thomas," she said, with a pitiful fight for loyalty to the unconscious man in her voice.

"Good God, Mirry! What do you mean? Are you mad? Oh! my darling," he said, with desperate entreaty in his voice, "don't frighten me! I know you are capable of any self-sacrifice, but don't sacrifice us both. It isn't right. Are my life and love of no account? John Thomas saved your uncle, but he will recover. He can't expect it of you. Any able-bodied man would have done the same."

"He is blind, and it was for my sake," she said; "now do you understand?"

"They had moved into Nance Quine's parlour, opposite the room in which John Thomas lay. They could hear Nance at her spinning-wheel as she watched by the old man overhead. The busy whirr, whirr, and the tap, tap of the foot-board on the floor broke the oppressive silence that followed the girl's words.

"John Thomas blind!" her lover said, his face turning a dead white.

"Yes, blind," Mirry-Ann said; "quite blind. And he can't bear darkness even for a minute. John Thomas lived by his eyes, they were his brains. Oh! it is too cruel to a man like him—with no resources in himself. You see now," she continued, with a desperate conviction in her voice, "that it is my duty to make his life more bearable. I sent him back into the fire."

"What for?" her lover asked, almost sternly. "Oh! why was not I there? Why didn't I win you by risking my life?"

"Mirry-Ann took a deep breath before she answered.

"I asked him to save a paper which meant a great deal to me—it meant—" the girl said with her voice full of the tenderest love, "it meant that I might perhaps one day have married you. It was the certificate of my mother's marriage. I found it in the Bible press. I could not let it be burnt, for I had forgotten the address of the office she was married in."

"Oh, Mirry!" he exclaimed. "Oh, my poor love! your mother's story was nothing to me. Did you think I cared—have I lost you for so little? God have pity on us both!"

"But it was everything to me," she said; "until I found that paper I would not have married you. After I knew that although my father broke my poor mother's heart, that the blood in my veins, on his side at least, was as good as yours, and that I had no occasion to blush for my birth, I thought," said Mirry, with a world of regret in her tone, "that if our love proved good and true, and your theory that we were destined for each other seemed right, that I—" she hesitated. "But I was all wrong; I see now that it was never intended; I had fought against marrying a man of my mother's people—against obeying my uncle's wish, until this dreadful thing happened to show me my duty."

"Your sacrifice is too great; it almost amounts to insanity," he said, passionately. "My love, my dear, dear love, it is too horrible that you, my own sweetheart—my dear, pure heart, should marry a blind man whose every touch is distasteful to you—a man whose caresses will make love hideous in your eyes—and our love is so sweet! What am I to do? Have pity on me, Mirry; how can I live and think of you as his wife?"

"Oh, hush!" she said; "have pity on him, he needs it most. Perhaps I imagine the horror of blindness more vividly than you, for in my lonely life the beauty of Nature has been everything to me—Nature was my lover till you came. John Thomas is only a child of Nature; without his eyesight he is lost. Think! Shut your eyes and think," she cried, "where the horizon in darkness lies. His world is limited now to the space he stands in. I must make a new world for him, I must make him see." She paused for a moment, then said, almost in a whisper, "Good-bye; God give courage to us both."

"For one exquisite moment she lay in his arms, and he kissed her weeping eyes, and fondled her wonderful hair. The droning of the spinning-wheel in the room above made a mournful music to the girl's low sobs. Ah! the comfort of his

touch, and the love in his gentle caresses! They were each others now, the girl unreising, and the world forgotten. Dick Schofield, with love's unconquerable hope in his heart, forgot that his momentary joy was rooted in despair. With the girl he loved in his arms, mutely confessing her love by gentle acceptance of his kisses, how could he realise that some day she would marry the village fisherman lying asleep in the cottage kitchen?"

So Schofield goes away. Later—and before the marriage has taken place—Mirry-Ann confides to the squire the secret of her birth. A perfectly innocent letter from the squire to her, referring to "our secret," comes into the hands of John Thomas, who induces a mischievous girl to read it to him; and afterwards comes a kind of negative murder of the squire. That is to say, he lets the squire walk unwarned to his death. That is on the eve of his marriage to Mirry-Ann, and on the morning of that marriage John Thomas goes stark mad. So, after a great deal of tragedy, Dick Schofield returns, and he and Mirry-Ann live happily for ever afterwards. Altogether a strong book, with a good deal of interest.

"Féu," by Max Pemberton (Hodder and Stoughton), is a bright romance. Féu herself was a very fascinating and high-spirited singer with whom Prince Jerome, son of an Austrian archduke, had fallen in love, to the annoyance of his father. Her father, Georges de Berthier, was a mean old hypocrite, whom the myrmidons of the archduke bribed to spirit Féu out of Vienna to London, whither, in due course, Prince Jerome followed them. Leslie Drummond was an English admirer of Féu. Now when Jerome came to London, Lamberg, an emissary of the archduke, bribed de Berthier to spirit his daughter away again to Paris, and made Féu believe that Jerome was



going there too; and Drummond, like Sir Boyle Roche, smelling a rat and seeing it in the air, followed. In Paris Féo was, to all intents and purposes, imprisoned in a house in the Avenue Marceau, from which, however, she escaped in the dead of night, only, in due course, to be locked up in the Préfecture for the night. The scene there is a good example of Mr. Pemberton's power of minute description.

"He opened the door of a smaller room behind the office and bade her enter. An officer in uniform carried a bottle of good Bordeaux, and set it on the plain wooden table. Féo sank into the deal chair as though she would never have the strength to rise again. 'You are very kind to me,' she said. 'I shall be interesting to my English friends for the rest of my life. To have spent a night in the Préfecture! Some people would lecture about it, monsieur.' 'Drink a glass of wine, mademoiselle, and that will help you to be eloquent. To-morrow you will laugh at it all. And you will say that we were not such dreadful people. We do not eat our prisoners.'

"He pushed the glass towards her and watched her drink the wine. Then he returned to his desk. A *sergent de ville* had come in with two women, whose cries and oaths resounded through the building in a deafening clamour. Something of the more terrible side of Paris life was shown to her in that moment. She beheld the women striking at one another and at the officers who held them; she saw them surrounded by many men, who pinioned them, and so carried them to that corridor of police-cells which Paris has called 'the mousetrap.' It was a vivid, haunting scene; it compelled her to say again, 'How if I were never to escape from this place?' The contrasts of her life were odd indeed. She was singing at Covent Garden but a few days ago; was dreaming of the day when the triumphs of Melba and Calvé might be hers. To-night the singer had become a prisoner in the greatest of the prisons of Paris; she had left her father for ever—was alone, without a friend, unless Leslie Drummond should come to her in the greatest crisis of her life. And of all her thoughts this latter nerved her most surely. She told herself courageously that she would find Jerome to-morrow, though her father himself came to the Conciergerie to forbid her freedom.

"Others were brought to the Préfecture—a beggar accused of picking pockets, a young soldier charged with stabbing a comrade, a well-schooled thief, who bowed to the detectives and greeted them affably. This fellow helped her mind away from the exciting train of thought to which she had been led. He was an amusing rogue. 'Look at my thumbs, gentlemen,' he said; 'you will find new marks upon them since I was here before. They are marks of the jemmy. Do not forget that I put you up to it. You will say something for me, gentlemen, and when I come out I will send you the drawing-room clock. Ah! you do not want the drawing-room clock. *Cré nom*

—I have no luck.' They took the fellow away to a cell, and when another spell of waiting had passed the inspector returned to the little room wherein Féo was sitting. He found her with her head buried in her arms, fast asleep. 'Mademoiselle,' he said, 'this is a hard bed. Your English friend is here, and we are going to send you back with him.'

"She awoke with a start, and saw behind the Frenchman the burly figure and good-humoured face of her friend Leslie Drummond.

"Leslie!" she cried, holding out both her hands to him, "I knew you would come."

For the rest the story moves quickly. Leslie, seeing his own case to be hopeless, fetched Jerome. Jerome took her to the house of an eccentric and romantic countess in the provinces, where there was a pretty niece Victorine. Lamberg kidnapped Féo once. She escaped by jumping out of the train. A railway porter, and, at last, Jerome, came to the rescue. Jerome struck Lamberg. A duel was imminent. Féo had a vision of it. Seeking to find the scene of her vision, she came across a nice old gentleman, who was really the archduke, but pretended to be the Count de Travna, Lamberg's successor. Together they saw the duel, which was harmless. Together they returned to the chateau of the countess, where, just before a great banquet, the archduke revealed himself. Féo concluded that by allowing Jerome to marry her she would ruin his career as a prince. She made up her mind to go away under Leslie's escort, and the next passage shows what her feelings were, and why she did not go.

"Oh! God knows it is hard enough; they will never understand me—they have never understood me from the first. And yet I must—I must for Jerome's sake."

"It was a piteous word, uttered aloud as she stood at the stable door listening eagerly for Leslie's footstep on the path. And when an answer to it reached her ears she turned as though one had struck her in the face. She thought herself to be alone—but the archduke stood at her side, and his was the voice she had heard. 'Miss de Berthier,' he said, and that was all.

"She did not know how to answer him. There, before her, was an erect old man, with hands outstretched, and love and pity for her in his kindly eyes.

"Miss de Berthier—Féo," he said, "help me to make my son happy. I wish it." She sank at his feet weeping.

And then Leslie married Victorine. There, in a few breathless sentences and in a few extracts, is a sufficient outline of the story; but there remain behind, not indicated save by an epithet or two, a rare brightness and vivacity of style which serve to make a somewhat improbable story remarkably entertaining.

## A BOHEMIAN COUNTRY HOUSE.

THE accompanying illustrations from photographs, for which we are indebted to the kindness of the Countess Westphalia, are of a very fine country house at Kulm, in Bohemia, a place renowned in the history of the Napoleonic wars. It was here, in the last convulsive struggles of the First Empire—last, that is to say, before the episode of the Hundred Days—that one of the heaviest of the final blows fell on the



THE TROUT STREAM.



THE TROUT POND.

great conqueror, in the capitulation of Marshal Vandamme to a combined force of Russians and Prussians. Ten thousand of Vandamme's troops, with the Marshal himself, were taken prisoners, after an equal number of killed and wounded had been left on the field.

Now there is a curious circumstance connected with the description that has been sent us of this country house and



THE HOUSE AS SEEN ACROSS THE POND.

grounds. The house was built, we are there told, "in the beginning of the last century." This note as to its date comes to us from the pen of a German lady. (Loyal we have no doubt; and has not Kaiser Wilhelm, for reasons that may or may not be associated with the new naval programme, declared that the twentieth century began at the beginning of the year 1900?) The letter, like the letter of a British lady, is without date. It came to us early in January, 1900. Now to what century do the words "the last century" in that letter refer? We must leave the question, insoluble by our own analysis, to the more keen acumen of our readers. From the letter we cannot tell, but some light is surely thrown on the problem by the aspect of THE HOUSE AS SEEN ACROSS THE POND. The situation, with the great hills rising at the back, is picturesque, and the house itself has an aspect of solidity that promises comfort, and dimensions that imply great accommodation and possibly no little magnificence.

THE MAIN APPROACH is by way of a long avenue running through the park. We are not aware whether the big pond or lake of the above illustration is stocked with trout, but it is to be inferred that it is rather given over to the occupation of the coarse fish, seeing that there is another pond in the park which is expressly called THE TROUT POND. Those of us who have had the good fortune to fish for trout in German waters—in the preserved waters, that is to say—know what trout fishing in that country can be, namely, baskets that both for quantity and for quality are not to be rivalled by anything that we can do in this native land of ours, trout in such numbers and of such confiding nature that really the art of the angler is reduced to its simplest elements, and we begin to ask ourselves whether these can really be cousins—cousins German or germane—of the sly rascals that lead us such a life in the Test or the Itchen. They become too easy of capture. It is a fault, no doubt; but no doubt, too, it is a fault on the right side.

This trout pond in the great park does not look, by the trees that crowd up to its banks, as if it favoured the throwing of the unskilful angler. There would be much work for some of us, we may suspect, in tree climbing to get our flies down from the branches. And the like comment holds good of THE TROUT STREAM running under the light and shadow that plays through the foliage overhead. For the rest, it is a swift and merry stream, just such as we might suppose the "lusty trout" to love.

The house was built and the grounds laid out "in the beginning of the last century" by the Graf Kalawrat, to whom the property belonged. On a high hill, fairly situated, stands

THE FAMILY VAULT, overlooking the bosage and the open glades of the park where the cattle are pasturing. We in Great Britain are rather too apt to think that we have been more successful than others in solving the problem of country house life. It is not a bad thing for us to be reminded now and again that "those others" too may have a country life that they can love, and know how to appreciate the pleasures that it can give and turn them to the best account.

## IN THE GARDEN.

### DESTROYING GARDEN PESTS.

SOME wise words are contained in an article upon this subject in the *Garden* lately, in which co-operation amongst gardeners is advised as one way of fighting the many pests that afflict vegetation. Mr. G. S. Saunders, the well-known entomologist, says: "It has often occurred to me that the destruction of garden pests, whether insect or fungus, particularly where gardens belonging to different proprietors join one another, would be rendered much easier if there were a certain amount of co-operation among the latter in this respect. What I would suggest is that every owner of a garden in a given district should agree to use in the destruction of pests the same means and at the same time of year, for it is certain that most pests are able to travel considerable distances

with the greatest ease. Take, for instance, such a common pest as the gooseberry saw-fly, whose grubs do so much injury to the foliage of gooseberry bushes. The saw-flies can easily fly from one garden to another, so that however careful A may be in endeavouring to destroy this pest, and perhaps has succeeded in stamping it out on his premises, yet his neighbour B is careless in this matter. A's bushes will in all probability be infested by grubs hatched from eggs laid by saw-flies bred on B's domain. . . . It seems to me that it is a matter that might well be taken up by local horticultural societies. Instructions might be written and given to each member, showing the best means of combating the various pests, and each member should promise when his crops are attacked, however slightly, to use the appropriate remedies at the proper time. Anyone that does not belong to the society, but possesses a garden in the district, should be pressed to use the same remedies, and everything should be done to render it easy for him to do so." This is excellent advice. The way to destroy a plague of any kind is for those threatened or attacked to bind themselves together to prevent its extension.

### CHINESE PRIMULAS AT MESSRS. CARTER'S NURSERY.

At the present time there is a beautiful display of Chinese Primulas in the Forest Hill nurseries of Messrs. Carter and Co. Few flowers have undergone greater improvements during recent years than the Chinese Primulas, of both



THE FAMILY VAULT.

double and single forms, the range of colouring now extending from purest white to almost intense blue. The strain at Forest Hill is remarkably distinct and pleasing, and the "blue" varieties show the results of painstaking selection over many years. Named varieties abound in the general group, but pressure upon our space prevents individual description. For pure colouring, freedom, and robust growth, these Chinese Primulas are difficult to eclipse.

### ERICA CARNEA—THE SPRING HEATH.

The Heath family is represented at this time by the pretty Erica carnea, the spring or winter Heath, but it is strange that a family beautiful in its leaf colouring and in the mass of flowers crowning the tufted growth is seldom





THE MAIN APPROACH AT KULM.

planted in a true way in English gardens. The moorland and heathy bank, seas of purplish colouring from the covering of heather, win admiration from even those callous generally to the charm of natural scenery and its setting of flowers. Why not, then, seek out other species and varieties of hardy *Ericas* to bring beauty to the garden? It seems needless to write about *Erica carnea*, one of the more familiar of the family, but the fact is that, though known by name, its flowers are strangers. The winter Heath is a plant for the rock garden, for the margins of the shrubbery, for the bank, and to form a groundwork to things of taller growth. In the gardens at Kew the Heaths are used as edgings to beds filled with *Kalmias*, *Rhododendrons*, and similar shrubs. The white variety is pretty, but we regard the deeper reds as warmer in colour and more effective at this time. In the Kew hand-list the varieties of *E. carnea* are as follows: *Alba*, *alba minor*, *atropurpurea*, *atrosanguinea*, *purpurea*, and *rosea*. When the winter is mild this Heath flowers in January in the South of England and Ireland, and in the early spring in the North. Another name for *Erica carnea* is *E. herbacea*.

## RHODODENDRON DAURICUM.

It is pleasant to see before the winter has gone some little bush in full flower in a sheltered warm corner of the garden. This *Rhododendron* will behave thus, and even in January when the weather is mild. The flowers are quite unlike in colour the majority of the winter-flowering shrubs, which are usually of inconspicuous colour, but in this case the colour is a warm rose purple, which remains fresh and bright whilst those of other species are destroyed. Each flower measures about 1½ in. across, and the plant grows from 3 ft. to 4 ft. high, forming a dense, almost evergreen bush. As it comes from Siberia there is no question concerning its hardiness, and in that land of snow it grows so abundantly that when in flower the mountain-sides are purple with colour.

## WORK IN THE GARDEN.

At the time of writing the garden is revealing its new life. Flowers are peering up through the soil, and buds of tree and shrub are swelling quickly under the stronger rays of the sun. Seeds must be thought of, and it is time to send in orders, as success in flower or vegetable culture depends in no small degree upon the time seeds are sown. Remove worn-out growths from wall Roses, but defer pruning the tea-scented and hybrid perpetual bush and standard varieties for a few days. Increase hardy perennials by division of the roots. Push forward with all arrears of tree and shrub planting, and give more air to bedding plants upon showery days when no keen withering winds prevail. At this time cuttings of bedding plants may be taken, such as of *Zonal Pelargoniums*, *Lobelias*, and similar flowers. They strike root quickly in a little heat from a hot-bed or warm plant house.

## TUBEROUS BEGONIAS FROM SEED.

This brilliant flower, more popular for summer gardening than any other, is easily raised from seed, and the seedlings will bloom well the same year if the seed is sown in February or at once. Even selected colours will reproduce themselves faithfully in the offspring, and this is a great gain. Many delightful associations of colour may be obtained with tuberous Begonias; a bed may be of a pure white flower for the margin, filling up inside with some pure scarlet or crimson. There is a wonderful variety of shades, pure white, rose, pink, crimson, scarlet, buff, orange scarlet, orange, and pure apricot, a rich satisfying colour, unusual amongst flowers, and the more welcome for this reason. Sow the seed at once of the variety desired, and take great care in sowing, as the seed is very small, almost like dust. Use pots or a shallow pan, which must be

thoroughly well drained and filled with a soil made up of loam, leaf mould, and sharp silver sand. Sprinkle a little fine soil over the seed, and prick off the seedlings as they appear, because germination is extremely irregular, and frequently the most beautiful seedlings are the last to appear. Then pot them up singly, or prick out at sufficient distance apart in pans or boxes to ensure future development unchecked. Gradually harden them off, shading lightly from hot sun, and plant out in early June in beds composed of fairly rich soil, such as vegetable refuse and well-decayed manure.

## PEGGING DOWN ROSES FOR A BOUNTIFUL FLOWER DISPLAY.

We are surprised sometimes when visiting gardens fragrant with a thousand Roses that the "pegging-down system" of Rose culture, as it is called, is not more popular. The writer was reading lately the report of the conference held by the National Rose Society in 1898 upon Rose pruning and exhibiting, and in a paper by Mr. Cooling, the well-known rosarian, pegged-down Roses are referred to. Their culture is simple, and we hope with Mr. Cooling that the system "will extend." Nothing is more "beautiful than beds of one variety or of suitable sorts of hybrid perpetuals grown in this way; instead of being closely pruned, two or three of the longest and most promising should be selected from each plant and gently bent and tied or pegged down early in the spring, the ends of the shoots shortened just an inch or so in March to plump up the lower buds and start them into growth. In this way nearly every eye will produce a bloom, forming a real bed of Roses. After flowering, if the plants are doing well, strong shoots will be sent up from the base, many of them producing a succession of blooms in the autumn. The older growths which have borne their flowers should be cut away, and the best of the new shoots selected for pegging down the following year." This is the culture of Roses in this way in a nutshell, and should be tried by those who have not yet done so.

## PLANTING BULBS NOW.

Many bulbs may be planted at this season to flower during the summer months, and a few of the more important groups are the following: Lilies in variety, the most effective being *Lilium auratum*, very handsome amongst evergreen shrubs, the beautiful self apricot-coloured *Batemannie*, *Davuricum*, *Hansoni*, *longiflorum*, *Thunbergianum* and its varieties, remarkable for their dwarf growth and early flowering, the late-flowering speciosum group, one of the most satisfactory of all in the garden, and of varied colour, from the white of *Kraetzerei* to the rich rose of *macranthum*, and the Tiger Lilies, of which *splendens* is the richest in colour. All the Lilies named are worth massing, the later speciosum and Tiger sections in particular. Rarer than the foregoing is *Henryi*, a Lily resembling *L. speciosum*, and called in some books the "orange yellow speciosum," but it is quite distinct. The stems rise upwards of 6 ft. and bear a profusion of rich flowers of beautiful form. We enjoy this Lily most when it is planted in a small bed by itself. *Gladioli* may be planted now in an open border or bed where there is shelter from high winds. This has become an important family and is full of good garden flowers. *Montbretias*, the brilliantly-coloured Tiger flowers or *Tigridias*, *Watsonias*, *Kniphofias* or *Tritomas*, to use the old name for the family, *Irises*, and the *Galtonia* (*Hyacinthus*) *candicans* may be planted at this time.

## PLANTING CARNATIONS.

March is the month to plant out Carnations kept over the winter in pots into the open garden. And we are not sure that spring planting is not better than transferring the layers to their permanent positions in September. Considerable difference of opinion exists upon this point amongst experts. One thing is certain—it is fatal to plant weakly layers in September, or those of any rare variety, for winter frosts and wet will play havoc amongst them. When in pots they are more under control. Select for the garden, if plants are purchased now, good self-coloured varieties with flowers that do not split their calyces. This is all-important. A garden Carnation should be of sturdy growth, with erect strong stems supporting full flowers of decided colour or shades of it, held well within the calyx, and fragrant. The aim of the raiser should be to obtain varieties of this character.

CATALOGUES RECEIVED.—Lawns, etc.: James Carter and Co., High Holborn, London. Farm Seeds: Little and Ballantyne, Carlisle. Chrysanthemum: Vilmorin-Andrieux et Cie, 4, Quai de la Mégisserie, Paris. Seeds and Plants: H. A. Dreer, 714, Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, U.S.A.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.—We shall be pleased to assist our readers in matters concerning the garden. We are also in touch with many first class gardeners, and shall be happy to recommend one to any who may require the services of a reliable man.

## EEL-TRAPS ON . . . . . . ENGLISH RIVERS.

FISH and flour go together as bye-products of all our large rivers, except those of the Broads, where the fall is, as a rule, too slight to drive a mill-wheel. The combination comes about thus: Wherever there is a water-mill, a mill cut is made to take the water to it. The larger the river the bigger and deeper the mill cut and dam, unless the mill is built across an arm of the stream itself. This mill dam, as every trout fisher knows, holds the biggest fish, and where there are no trout, or few trout, it will be full of big fish, while in the pool below the mill there are perhaps as many more. Of all the food fishes of our rivers the eel is really far the most important. He flourishes everywhere, in the smallest pools and brooks as well as in the largest rivers, and grows up to a weight of 9 lb. or 10 lb. His price indicates his worth, and never falls below 10d. per lb. Consequently he is valuable as well as plentiful, and the millers know this well. On nearly all rivers the millers have eel-traps, some of the ancient sort being "bucks," like those shown here, made of withes, and worked by expensive old-fashioned machinery like the mill gear. Another and most paying dodge of the

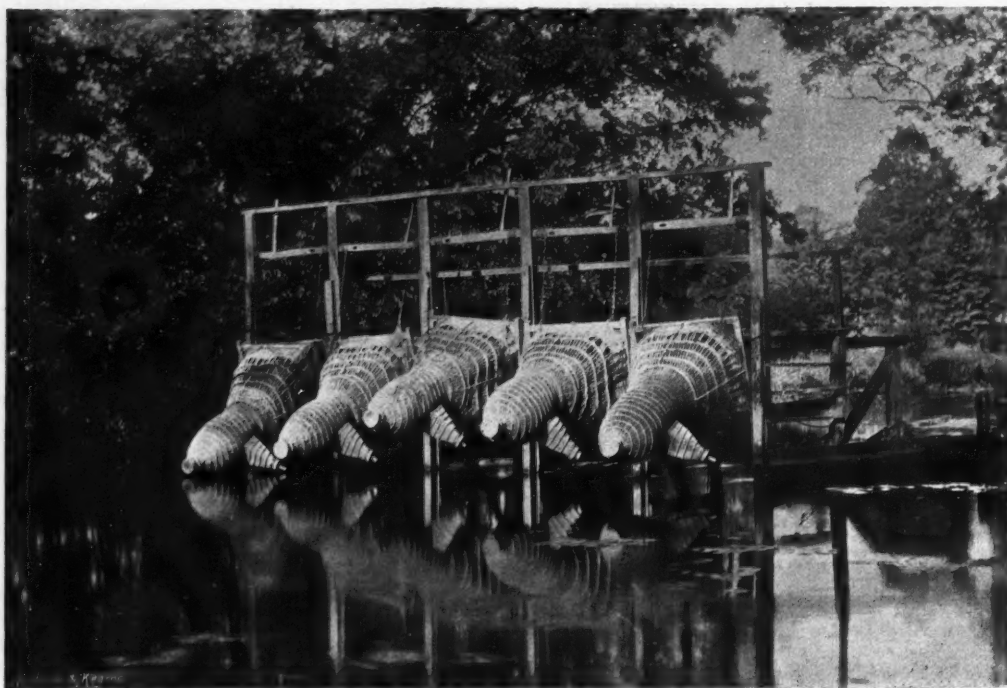
machine-made order is worked in the mill itself, and makes an annexe to the mill-wheel.

I have just spent an agreeable hour watching the making of barley meal and the catching of eels, literally side by side. It was sufficiently good fun to make me put my gun away for the afternoon, and give up a couple of hours' walk in snipe-haunted meadows, with the chance of a duck, to watch the mill and eel-traps working.

They were both in a perfect old-world bye-end of the Thames Valley, in the meads at the back of a forgotten but perfect abbey of the third order, under the tall east window of which the tributary river ran bank full, fringed with giant poplars, from which the rooks were flying to look at their last year's nests in the abbey trees.

The mill was, as might be supposed, the Abbey Mill; but on driving up the lane I was surprised to see how good and large was the miller's house, a fine Stuart dwelling of red and grey brick; and what a length of frontage the old mill showed, built of wood, as most of them are, but with two sets of stones, and space for two wheels. Only one was at work, and that was grinding barley meal—meal from nasty foreign barley full of dirt; but the miller had English barley meal too, soft as velvet and sweet as a new-baked loaf. Stalactites of finest meal dust hung from every nail, peg, cobweb, and rope end on the walls, fine meal strewed the floor, coarse meal poured from the polished shoots; to which the sacks hung by bright steel hooks, and on both floors ancient grindstones stood like monuments of past work and energy, while below and beside all this dust and floury dryness roared the flooded waters of the dam and the beating floats of the wheel. "Have you any eels?" I asked. "Come and see," said the miller.

He stopped his wheel, unbolted the door, and we looked up the mill dam, 200yds. long, straight as a line, embanked by double rows of ancient yews, the banks made and the trees planted by the monks 500 years ago. Then we stepped into the wheel-house, where the water, all yellow and foaming, was pouring into two compartments set with iron gratings below, on which it rose and foamed. Seizing a long pole with prongs like walrus teeth, the miller felt below the water



H. W. Taunt.

EEL-BUCKS AT MAGPIE ISLAND.

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on the bars. "Here's one, anyway," he said, and by a dexterous haul scooped up a monster eel on to the floor. In a box which he hauled from the dam he had more, some of 5lb. weight, which had come down with the flood—an easy and profitable fishery, for the eels can lie in the trap till he hauls them out, and sell at 10d. per lb. summer and winter. It pays as well as a poultry yard. Once he took a 9lb. fish; 2½lb. to 4lb. are common.

The eel-trap on the old Thames mill stream is imitated in other places where there is no mill. Thus at Mottisfont Abbey on the Test an old mill stream is used to work an hydraulic ram, and also to supply eels for the house; the water is diverted into the eel-trap, and the fish taken at any time. Another dodge for taking eels, which is not in the nature of what is called a "fixed engine," is the movable eel-trap or "grig wheel." It is like a crayfish basket, and is in fact the same thing, only rather larger. They can be obtained from that old river hand, Mr. Bambridge, at Eton, weighted, stoppered, and ready for use, for 7s. 6d. each, and unweighted for 5s. They are neat wicker-work tunnels, with the usual contrivance at the mouth to make the entrance of the eels agreeable and their exit impossible. The "sporting" side of these traps is that a good deal of judgment is needed to set

them in the right places in a river. Many people think that eels like carrion and favour mud. Mr. Bambridge says his experience is different, and his "advice to those about to fish" with this kind of eel-trap is suggestive of new ideas about eels. He says that "for bait nothing can beat about a dozen and a-half of small or medium live gudgeon, failing these large minnows, small dace, roach, loach, etc., though in some streams about a dozen good bright large lob worms, threaded on a copper wire and suspended inside, are very effective, and should always be given a trial. Offal I have tried but found useless, eels being a cleaner feeding fish than many are aware of; and feeding principally in gravelly weedy parts, the basket should be well tucked up under a long flowing weed, as it is to these places they go for food, such as the ground fish, loach, miller's thumb, cray fish, shrimps, mussels, etc. When I worked a fishery near here, I made it a rule after setting the basket to well scratch the soil in front



H. W. Taunt.

AT HARLEYFORD—IN NEED OF REPAIR.

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of the entrance with the boat-hook I used for lowering them, and firmly believe their curiosity was excited by the disturbed gravel. Choose water from 4ft. to 6ft. deep, and see basket lays flat. Every morning when picked up, lay them on the bank, pick out all weed and rubbish and brush them over with a bass broom, keeping them out of water till setting again at dusk."

Eel-bucks, of which few perfect sets now remain, are the fixed engines so often seen on the Thames, and are a costly and rather striking contrivance, adding greatly to the picturesqueness of parts of the river. They are very ancient, and date from days when the "eel-run" was one of the annual events of river life. The eels went down in millions to the sea, and the elvers came up in such tens of millions that they made a black margin to the river on either side by the bank, where they swam because the current was there weakest. The large eels were taken, and are still taken, on their downward journey in autumn. It is then that the Thames fills, and at the first big rush of water the eels begin to descend to reach the mud and sands at the Thames mouth, where they spawn. They always travel by night, and it is then that the heavy eel-bucks are lowered. Often hundredweights are taken in a night, all of good size, one of the largest of which there is any record being one of 15lb., taken in the Kennet

near Newbury. In the "grig-wheels" they are taken as small as 3oz. or 4oz.; but in the bucks they rarely weigh less than 1lb. The darkest nights are the most favourable. Moonlight stops them, and they do not like still weather. The upward migration of eels goes on from February till May on the Thames, but the regular "eel-fare" of the young grigs did not assume any great size till May, when as many as 1,800, about 3in. long, were seen to pass a given point in one minute. So say the records. But who could have counted them so fast?

A few recent developments of the eel trade elsewhere show how valuable this may be. Quite lately the Danes discovered that the Lim-fiord and some other shallow Broads on the West Danish Coast were a huge preserve of eels. They began trawling there steadily, and have established a large and lucrative trade in them. On the Bann, in Ireland, eel catching is still done in a large way, and the fish shipped to London. But the most ancient and yet most modern of eel fisheries is on the Adriatic, at Commachio, where lagoons 140 miles in circumference are stocked with eels, and eel breeding and export is carried out on a large scale. Even as early as the sixteenth century the Popes used to derive an income of £12,000 from this source.

C. J. CORNISH.



## AT THE THEATRE

"DON JUAN'S Last Wager" was a disappointment. We are all so interested in Mr. Martin Harvey, who seems to be the latest recruit to the ranks of the artistic "actor-managers" who have come to stay. There is always such

earnestness, such high endeavour in his work, such a poetical spirit over it, such a loving care in detail. We look to him to continue the tradition of the present generation of artistic actors in command of their own theatres. More than once in these columns Mr. Harvey has been pointed out as one of the very few coming men. So the depth of our disappointment may be gauged. Not that the career of him is in any way endangered by the production of Mrs. Cunningham Graham's adaptation from the Spanish of Zorilla; but he has as yet not made a step in advance of "The Only Way." Better luck next time.

The attractive personality of Mr. Harvey and one big scene hid the mediocrity of "The Only Way," and won popularity for it. The personality of Mr. Harvey has no such opportunity in the new play at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, and there is not the ghost of a big scene—nothing to compare with the frenzy of that of the Tribunal in "The Only Way." There is one attempt at real passion and strenuousness in "Don Juan's Last Wager," but its strength is only superficial, and, while one admires the fire and the feeling of Mr. Harvey's acting in it, it never really "gets home," because we are never carried away, we never forget we are witnessing a stage play.

We could have forgiven the fact that Mrs. Cunningham Graham's Don Juan is quite unlike any other Don Juan of Spanish or English literature. We might have regretted the fact, but we would have let it pass and found consolation in the fact that the new conception of him had provided us with a dramatic figure and a dramatic play. Unfortunately, it was new without being dramatic. The latest Don Juan is the most wibbly-wobbly Lothario we have ever met. There must have been a strong strain of the Nonconformist Conscience in his pedigree. All the time he was doing such awful things it must have been from a remembrance of the welcome which awaited the prodigal son. He knew that there was more joy in one repentant sinner than in all the goody-goody young men of old Seville who died young. Our Don Juan was an over-ripe rake, ready to fall into the hands of the first missionary. A young girl wins him to the rosy path of virtue by three minutes of innocent prattle. Half-a-dozen maidenly platitudes bring him up sharp, make him beg for forgiveness from his injured friends,

and send him to his knees deluged in remorse before the irate father of the persuasive young novice.

That is the new Don Juan. He is not an impressive figure. The authoress was too strong even for the powers of Mr. Martin Harvey.

But this new and startling conception of the world's finest roué would have been forgiven if the vandalism had dramatic power to recommend it; had the scene of his conversion been well done. To make such a conception convincing, even interesting, the scene of his repentance should have been an impassioned and a subtle scene. We should have gradually been led to his awakening; we should have been shown the birth and the growth of purity in him; a tremendous struggle between the darkness and the light. It was a great chance wasted. All we were given was a three minutes' conversation—and then Don Juan was a new man. The metamorphosis was too sudden; so sudden as to be quite unconvincing and almost ludicrous. Not all the passion of the actor's pleading for forgiveness at the hands of the men he had wronged could bring the play back to life and vigour after the insipidity of the incident which led to his regeneration.

What followed was mournful without being pathetic; sombre without being impressive. The legend is followed throughout with uninspiring fidelity—save in the one instance, and that instance completely perverted its meaning without supplying anything worthy in its stead. No originality of treatment or thought or grace of language mask the baldness of the author's methods. All is flat and unprofitable.

Scenes of great pictorial beauty, dances and most excellent music, composed by Mr. Bruhns, show plainly the spirit of art and earnestness with which Mr. Harvey has approached his task. Everything that he could do has been done, save in the provision of a good play and one error of judgment in its casting. Miss De Silva, earnest and intelligent as she is undoubtedly, is not qualified to play a character of such vital importance to the scheme as that of the heroine of a romantic play. For the rest, Mr. Herbert Sleath, while he has not yet mastered the art of elocution, acts with spirit and effect. Mr. Holbrook Blinn, Miss Filippi, Miss Marriott, and particularly Miss Louise Moodie, did everything possible, and it was not their fault that the play achieved so little.

THE revival of one of Mr. Pinero's earliest efforts is in itself a thing of much interest; a performance in which Miss Kate Rorke takes the leading part can never be without charm. We all remember the hullabaloo about "The Squire" and the controversy between the then budding dramatist



and the novelist, Mr. Hardy, on the likeness between the play, "The Squire," and the novel, "Far From the Madding Crowd." Of the piece it was said that its author "wafted the scent of the hay across the footlights"; at the Kennington Theatre the scent was still evident, but it had grown a little stale. How far Mr. Pinero has travelled since the days of the Hare and Kendal management of the St. James's Theatre, when "The Squire" first saw the light!

There is nothing in "The Squire" to prove that Mr. Pinero would become what he has become; that he would develop into a successful writer of plays seemed very likely. But there is nothing in this piece which entitles it to live. It is full of convention as well as cleverness, of hackneyed types besides good, old-fashioned drama. The company, led by Miss Rorke, played most efficiently.

"MARSAC OF GASCONY," by the well-known American actor, Mr. Vroom, which may provide Drury Lane Theatre with a spring programme, seems to promise something very romantic and exciting, if—as we hope—the play fulfils the promise of the preliminary "premature and authorised" paragraphs; which, however, is not an unfailing rule, unfortunately. The author seems to have impressed several good judges with the value of his play. We are told that it is written in the vein of Dumas, and that its hero, Marsac of Gascony, has many traits in common with D'Artagnan of immortal memory, although his adventures run along entirely different lines. About twenty years later than the period of "The Three Musketeers" is the period of the doings of the gallant Gascon gentleman, who at the outset is robbed of every proof of his identity save one, and suffers many trials in consequence. We are to be introduced to a gay and rollicking band of strolling players, which sounds excellent—for here should be colour and spirit in plenty.

Who is to be the Portia if Mr. Tree stages "The Merchant of Venice" next autumn, as we hope he will? It is a very serious question, for, searching eagerly, we see no ideal interpreter for this most fascinating of Shakespearean heroines; no one uniting in herself all the attributes of the winsome femininity which the character demands—the fun and the sentiment, the spirit and the gentleness. But Mr. Tree is a wonderful man in the casting of plays, and it is more than likely that he has a surprise in store for us. While we—in our presumption—see no ideal for the part, there are several actresses who would be very acceptable in it, who possess beauty and grace and charm and much intelligence. Rather than "The Merchant" should be denied us, rather than we should miss old Venice as it would be shown at Her Majesty's (think of the glamour of Venice treated with the poetry we have seen in Mr. Tree's "A Midsummer Night's Dream"), and the Jew, as Mr. Tree should be able to portray him—rather than forego these, we would be content with something less than the absolutely faultless Portia. After all, most of us possess a Portia of our own in our mind's eye, and so long as the medium in which Shakespeare's conception is conveyed to us is beautiful and winsome and appealing, the rest might be left to the lines of the poet and our own imaginations. So let it be "The Merchant," Mr. Tree, and you love us.

It is good news to learn that Mr. George Alexander has once again weathered the critical storm and achieved popular success with "Rupert of Hentzau." It is by no means the first time that the personal attraction of Mr. Alexander, the beauty and completeness and artistic endeavour of his productions, and the prestige of the St. James's Theatre, have proved more potent than the strictures of the experts. This is not wholly to be deplored. It shows that consistent good work and excellence of purpose count for much with the public, that they will support those who seek worthily to win their suffrages, and are willing to accept something less than perfection in the wares provided. Not on any account would one wish the critics to lower their standard of judgment; only by maintaining it at its highest shall we make for progress.

Nevertheless, pleasure is permissible in recording the fact that when a man

offers us his best—even when that best is not beyond caviar—the public are not ungrateful. "Rupert of Hentzau" at night and "The Prisoner of Zenda" at the Wednesday and Saturday matinées are attracting large audiences to the St. James's, and the restoration to health of Miss Fay Davis has necessarily given an increased fillip to its popularity. During her absence her parts have been admirably represented by Mrs. Maesmore Morris, who will later appear in them on tour. PHŒBUS.

## THE SHIRE HORSE SHOW.

THE Shire Horse Show, which attained its majority at the Agricultural Hall, Islington, last week, may be pronounced to have been an emphatic success upon the whole, although the total number of entries fell considerably short of those received twelve months ago. On the other hand, the quality was surprisingly good, especially in the young classes, but last year's champions continued to hold their own. In fact, Mr. Alexander Henderson's four year old Buscot Harold, which carried off the Stallion Challenge Cup for the third year in succession, is in the opinion of many competent judges quite good enough to repeat the performance upon more than one forthcoming occasion, provided he is allowed to do so; certainly he is a wonderfully fine young horse, though a better one on his top than he is below it. His stable companion, Buscot Squire, proved a pretty easy winner in the yearling stallions, and subsequently won the cup for the best yearling, two year old, or three year old in the show, the two representatives of the Buscot Stud being in consequence left in to compete for the challenge cup, which Harold captured without an effort. A particularly unlucky four year old was Mr. John Rowell's Bury Premier Duke, for he experienced the misfortune of being beaten by the last-named horse in his class, and of taking the reserve to him for the championship; but Bury Premier Duke is a grand young sire, and there is very little indeed to choose between him and his conqueror.

Mares were a capital lot, much satisfaction being expressed on all sides at the early success of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, the retiring president of the Shire Horse Society, as he began well by securing premier honours in the fillies with the very stylish bay Maidenhair. This youngster, however, failed to carry off the young mare cup, which fell to Dunsmore Combine, a daughter of Dunsmore Gloaming, who took the challenge cup as the best of her sex last year, and repeated the performance upon the present occasion. A peculiarity of Dunsmore Combine is that she is a chestnut, this colour being rather an uncommon one amongst Shires, and strongly objected to by many breeders, although the chestnuts are rapidly becoming more numerous. Whence they come it is rather difficult to tell, and in the case of the filly in question the problem is almost inexplicable, owing to the fact that her ancestors for generations have been mostly bay, with no chestnut blood about them.

H.R.H. the Prince of Wales attended the show on Wednesday, and was accorded a most enthusiastic reception, both on entering the royal box and upon taking up his position in the judging ring in order to present the cups and other trophies to the exhibitors who had won them. Subsequently a very interesting parade of the winners took place, several of the most notable animals being brought up before the Prince for special notice, amongst these being Maidenhair, the yearling winner already referred to, and the black Calwich Mavis, another of the Sandringham representatives, who was awarded premier honour in the class for mares of five years and over, and under 16h. high. It may be mentioned, too, that the Prince of Wales is the breeder of the champion mare, Dunsmore Gloaming, although she is now the property of Sir J. Maple.

## The Great Kingsclere Sale.

THERE have been many signs in recent years of a healthy spirit in racing matters in England. The sport is more and the betting less the central interest of the game. The leading daily sporting papers, which in tone and style are admirable, are full of interesting and thoughtful articles on breeding and training, while the discussion of the market takes a far less prominent place than of old. The fact is, the genuine sportsman who races likes to back his opinion, and to many the fact of backing a horse gives a certain sense of proprietorship. No more promising sign of the real interest taken in the sport of racing and the genuine love of horses of many Turf men could be shown than the crowd which may be expected at Kingsclere. To them it will be nothing that Kingsclere is an out-of-the-way place; every man who can spare the time will be there. Sporting papers will publish detailed and graphic accounts, which will be read by thousands. There will not, of course, be one in a hundred of those who go to the sale who will have the faintest chance of purchasing one of the nineteen lots that are to be offered. FLYING FOX is, of course, the centre of interest. The sale of the famous colt



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GOBLET.

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ORMENUS.

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GREY BIRD.

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RYDAL MOUNT.

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RACING CUP.

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is likely to achieve a record. Perhaps readers of COUNTRY LIFE may recollect that many weeks ago I suggested 35,000 guineas to 40,000 guineas as his price. Although some no doubt thought the estimate was exaggerated, it has now become the general opinion. Flying Fox is a great horse, he has done all that has been asked of him, and has done it well. The colt is dear, too, to the racing public, for he has by his splendid career vindicated their opinion that Orme was the horse of his day, and that but for foul play he would have been numbered among the greatest of classic winners. Whatever the cause that hindered Orme from being a great success on the turf, I have always regarded him as one of the very best of modern race-horses. The Orme line will become of immense value at the stud. It is a racing, staying, and winning strain, and I am as firmly of opinion as ever that the man who pays up to £40,000 for Flying Fox will not make at all a bad bargain commercially. But of the score or so of men who can enter into the competition for the great horse, only one can buy him. Now we all know that when men go to a horse sale intending to buy a particular animal, and stay to the end of the bidding, they almost always bid for something else. Thus it may be expected that the ten or fifteen disappointed millionaires will make the prices for the remaining lots good.

Yet it would, perhaps, be difficult to go wrong. If we take CALVELEV, there is no better handicap horse in the market, and his new owner might well feel that he had a good race in his pocket, and no long time to wait. I have not hesitated to express in the racing notes the very high opinion I entertain of GOBLET, and though this colt will be excluded by the Duke's death from many valuable races, yet he should repay the purchase money. Of MISSEL THRUSH I only know that the late Duke of Westminster fancied him greatly, and, if he stands training, should do well. No one can look at him without seeing what racing-like points he has. I remember seeing his mother (Throstle) win the St. Leger, and when looking her over after the race ventured to prophesy for her a successful stud career. Shifty she was, but when she chose no race-horse of her year, not even Ladas himself, could gallop in better form. The colt should thus be of great value. Another lot in the sale which is sure to attract much attention is VANE, inasmuch as she is own sister to Flying Fox. As a race-horse she is not entitled to such a place among the three year old fillies of 1900 as, for example, Paigle or St. Nydia, but it would be difficult to estimate her value to a breeder, and she will probably pay her way as a race-horse before she retires.

But whatever be the actual prices, the occasion will be an historic one in the annals of racing. Mr. and Mrs. Porter have seen certainly the most famous horses of the century pass out through the stable gate at Kingsclere.

To gallop over those downs on which so many classic races have been won—for it is on the training ground after all that races are won and lost—whether business, pleasure, or the desire to be present on a memorable occasion take us down, if only the weather be propitious, it will be well worth the trouble of the journey. If Kingsclere is remote it is beautiful, famous, and in itself a quaint and interesting village.

## RACING NOTES.

THE shadow of the war was over Sandown last week. We had our usual three days' meeting, but missed the gay crowd, the cheery greetings and the bright faces of our soldier friends. To the present writer, whose best friends and comrades of sport are in South Africa, there was nothing but memories and sad thoughts. No success can obliterate the recollections of men like Lord Ava, Colonel Aldworth, Cortlandt Mackenzie, and many more. But to take the events of the week as they come, we had two days at Lingfield on Tuesday and Wednesday. This is always a well-managed meeting, and if the racing was not very good, nor the company large, the afternoon can always be enjoyed if the weather is tolerable. The going was very deep, and very nearly upset the best thing of the day. In the Warriors' Handicap Hurdle Race it was odds on Thurling, but Mr. Ripley forgot that on deep ground the final rush does not always come off. As it was he got home with difficulty from Linhope. The victory of Tripod in the Southern Handicap Steeplechase

must have been satisfactory to the owner. Not that she won in very brilliant style, for it was touch-and-go with her over two or three fences, but it is not every day that a three-mile steeplechase is won by a mare that cost a ten-pound note at Aldridge's a short time before. Mr. G. S. Davies did well during the week, riding three winners, one at Lingfield and two at Sandown. I hear that at the latter the sport was not very good, the defeat of North Sea by Friary in the March Handicap Hurdle Race being a surprise. The grey started at 10 to 1, and beat Mr. Bulteel's horse rather easily at last.

As time goes on the interest in the Grand National increases, but it is chiefly centred in the endeavour to divine Mr. Bulteel's intentions about Manifesto. It is evident, from the way Drogheda is being knocked about in the betting, either



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CALVELEV.

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that the horse is not going on quite right, or that the owner desires to win with Manifesto. It is a very natural desire on his part to create a record by winning the Liverpool race a third time with the same horse, and under such a weight as 12st. 13lb. For my own part, good as Manifesto is, I do not believe he can do what is asked of him. For one thing, he has passed the age at which horses go on improving, and, for another, the weight is too much, even if the going be hard; on soft ground it is impossible. On the other hand, Drogheda is a horse that can go through dirt, and he probably is at his best this year. If Drogheda, as the market suggests at present, is to give way to his stable companion, then Tipperary Boy, if



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MISSEL THRUSH.

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he is all right, which is not quite certain, seems the best chance. The Irish horse is to be ridden by Moran, a powerful jockey, who should be able to steer the horse. Tipperary Boy pulls hard at times, and is not the easiest possible animal to ride. Moran is not so well known over here, but I have seen him ride very well in Ireland. Easter Ogue is on everyone's lips just now for the valuable National Hunt Steeplechase on Friday, at Kempton. He ought to win it easily, and another year might grow into a Grand National winner.

As for the Lincolnshire Handicap, assuming that neither Damocles nor Refractor is being seriously prepared for this race, and that Sly Fox is too cunning, and perhaps Sir Geoffrey will not stand on, then Strike a Light, ridden by O. Madden, and Heir Male seem to have the best claim with Gerolstein, if he goes to the post fit and well. This was the horse I first chose as



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KINGSCLERE SALE: GARB OR.

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a likely one, and though we do not hear quite so much about him as we did, I still have faith in his chances if he starts.

Tod Sloan comes over to ride as a free-lance. It will be wise to watch his riding before following his mounts. It is difficult to believe in the ultimate and continued success of a jockey who lives at the Hotel Cecil in the racing season. Few riders can keep their best form unless they ride gallops as well as races, and those of us who remember how Fred Archer, the Cantons, and other fine horsemen of our earlier days never neglected this duty, may well distrust a jockey who does not perform it regularly.

The sale of the Count de Berteux's stud reminds us of the retirement of a good but unlucky sportsman from the French Turf. Mr. Guy Marsh, who has greatly improved as a rider, is to go to South Africa, and will sell off his horses. Weldon, Tod Sloan's successor in Lord William Beresford's service, has gone to Newmarket, and will ride gallops regularly for the stable.

VEDETTE.

## O'er Field and Furrow.

THIS week hunting news must take precedence even of sport. First, then, Mr. Evan Hanbury, of Branston, by Oakham, has been unanimously elected by the committee of the Cottesmore Hunt. His name will be recommended to the general meeting, and will no doubt be accepted. I am glad that the country is not to be divided, but sorry that Gillson is to be replaced by a new huntsman. If that new huntsman be, as report has it, Arthur Thatcher, who made his name with Mr. Fernie, and has since gained much praise for sound work over the Essex ploughs, no better appointment could be made, but I am rather sorry for the change. Mr. Hanbury is a fine horseman, and many readers will remember his win on his own good horse, Golden Drop, at Croxton. I asked a friend to tell me something of the sport of the Cottesmore on their Lincolnshire side, but he writes that on the day he went there was too much wet for hounds to do anything.



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GREY LADY.

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are over far too soon. The Belvoir are proverbially quick starters. Hounds ran hard from the find with all the noted drive of the race of Belvoir, but an open earth at Melton Spinney received the fox. Brentingby gave us a second fox, which also went to ground. I was lucky in choosing to follow the

Belvoir again on Friday, in preference to the Quorn at Twyford, for that pack had only a very moderate day's sport. The scent was not good enough to enable hounds to travel very fast. Though the country they were in is a good one when there is a scent, a faded line enables a fox to set hounds and huntsman many a stiff puzzle, which is very hard to solve when railways, brooks, and coverts are all mingled in an intricate maze. I have before now spoken of the hunting grounds of the Belvoir on the Lincolnshire side with praise, and though not without some misgivings as to the state of the country, I started for the fixture at Bitchfield. Hounds were first taken to some woods near Imham on the borders of the Cottesmore country. Drawing on till they reached the section known as Old Park, a fox jumped up just in front of hounds, and almost before we had time to realise the find the pack had disappeared. When again they came in sight it was a field ahead pointing to Osgodby Village. A sharp turn to the left let in everyone; fox, hounds, and field went through the coppice. Then came another covert, but hounds did not go in, for putting their noses down they chimed away on the outskirts till a roadway brought them to a check, and gave us time to look round. Mr. Cyril Greenall, the acting Master, was near hounds, there was a Miss Heathcote in a good place, as also Major Longstaffe and Mr. Edgar Lubbock.

It was all over, however, and we went off to draw Ingoldsby. Not much came of it, save that



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VANE.

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hounds crossed the brook near Boothby, and threw a good many of us out of the chase. By the time we got over the brook and reached hounds they were working a faint line over some sticky sodden plough, and had at last to give it up altogether.

## True Shikar Stories by a Woman.

THE great aim and object of shikar stories nowadays seems to be advice as to the battery and ammunition to be used, as to where you ought to buy your "solar topee," and how to test its genuineness. By taking it for granted that the sportsman is to be someone else's guest, the writer airily waves aside all unpleasant details and launches the bewildered shikari into a paradise of game. Not so are ninety-nine experiences out of a hundred. Every man who has done small or big game shooting in India knows well the casual "be-bandobast" way many a really good shoot has been pulled off, and he equally knows how futile have been the most elaborate and well-organised plans. India is a land of the unexpected, except in climate, for from October to June you can put your finger on a fine day for months ahead. In all else the unexpected occurs, and more so in shikar than anything.

All my mankind have been sportsmen. I listened eagerly from my childhood to their various experiences and emphatic statements as to how, under given circumstances, horses, pigs, tigers, and even quail would behave. Nevertheless, not on one single occasion have my own experiences tallied with theirs. Hence, when the family met at rare intervals and related their tales, the old dad used to remark that the "lying season had set in." They were not lies, though. For, as I said before, each and all of my own observations with regard to the habits and ways of beasts and birds contradicted each other.

It is an old-world story that where wild dogs take up their abode in a jungle no tiger will remain. Listen now to what befel Bob and me. One glorious half-sunny, half-cloudy day in early June, when the Indian world was counting the moments to the burst of the monsoon, our eyes were gladdened by the advent of Chuckroo, a "ghond" villager, with news of a man-eating tiger four miles away. We had not, like Phil Robinson's Dak Bungalow fowl, "been brought up on suspicion," so we never disbelieved "khubber" until we had tried it, and, furthermore, we never lost a minute in starting for the spot. That want of faith, that delay in starting, are two of the commonest mistakes made by men in India. "It is better to have been and lost than never to have been at all." For even if khubber is false you have lived through that joyous excitement of hope. Moreover, the jaunt out five or six or even twenty miles is a pleasure and you are the better for it, though maybe a bit sick at being sold. On the other hand, if the khubber be true, and you have not gone, then you are a wiser and a sadder man to your life's end, and will never, never cease to regret that trophy which is relegated to the "might have beens." So I say, arise and go forth at once, as we did.

By the time that we got to the village the sky was heavily overcast, and a distant rumble foretold a thunder-storm. However, we agreed to chance a wetting, and walked off with our string charpoy and usual fittings for a machan. A quarter of an hour's walk brought us to the spot, where we learnt that Chuckroo had not actually seen the kill, but had evidently disturbed the tiger, for he had seen "stripes" sneak off as he came up. Taking all for granted, he had gone straight back to give us the khubber. This news necessitated caution, as we could not be sure whether the tiger might not have returned early, not having had his fill in the morning.

A few minutes' careful stalking, and then we saw the buffalo alive and well! This was a blow. It was raining hard, so we decided to hark back and sleep in the village. Oh! such a night; the only dry spot in the tiny shed was under our waterproof sheet, which covered ourselves and our catables. Dawn brought fine weather, and with it we sallied forth. On arrival at the place where the buffalo had been the night before we found it gone, unmistakably killed and dragged off down a stony nullah. We tracked it for 150yds., and then it became too risky, for the rocks got higher and the grass thicker. Bob said we had better divide and each take a bank of the nullah.

Chuckroo and I went on the left and Bob on the right. Suddenly Chuckroo dropped on his hunkers, and bade me do the same. There was the tiger slinking off 50yds. away through bamboo jungle on the right bank. A low whistle drew Bob's attention, and Chuckroo pointed with his axe to the tiger, but Bob evidently could not see it. It seemed an age to me before he did, and then I saw him run up a slope so as to cut the tiger off from the cliff for which he was making. Bob and tiger disappeared, and then I saw the latter just on the brow of a rise with his tail lashing the ground, and evidently much disturbed at something other than ourselves. I did not dare to fire, not knowing where Bob might be, and Bob told me afterwards that he was in like plight. However, he said that after a minute or so he saw the brute turn to go off, and, unable to resist a last chance, he fired at where he thought the tiger's shoulder was behind a leafy bush.

After the shot all was still. Then Bob joined us. The tiger had disappeared and was not to be found, so we went back to look up the kill. Not 100yds. away we found it being torn to pieces by a pack of no less than thirteen wild dogs—"some kutlas." This, then, was the reason of stripe's anger and the "lashin' of his tail." We hunted the red dogs off, but they only growled and retired a few paces into the jungle, and sat there watching us. Hoping against hope that the tiger might yet return again in the evening, Bob put Chuckroo up a tree with a cloth full of stones to keep the wild dogs off the kill, whilst we returned to get some food. At 3 p.m. we found

Chuckroo almost weeping, his stones long since expended, and the dogs enjoying a square meal, in spite of handfuls of leaves and sticks Chuckroo had thrown down at them from time to time. He dared not have descended, for they would have set on him alone and unarmed.

Bob was furious, and determined to shoot one of the pack, so we climbed up into the tree. As soon as the dogs found all quiet out they trotted again. It was interesting to watch them, as they are seldom or ever met now in the jungles. Many thoughts of Kipling's "Mowgli" crowded our minds as we watched these terrors of the jungle. Dusk was falling as Bob's rifle spoke, and Dhole, the red dog, lay dead on the carcass of the buffalo. The pack slunk off, and the tiger came no more. D. F.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### A HUGE SKATE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—The accompanying picture may be of interest to some of the readers of your most interesting paper. This skate was one of five that have been caught by friends of mine in Kenmare Bay, South of Ireland. The fish portrayed in the picture weighed 130lb., and the largest of them turned the scale at 166lb.—A. R. H. B.



### ON £500 A YEAR!

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Being a reader of your paper, I am much taken with your plans of houses, and I am asking your advice as to what income I should require to keep an establishment as described below: House, bachelor's establishment, capable of putting up two guests, a small garden for one gardener, two horses and a grass-fed pony, besides a trap-groom in livery. I would like a pleasant country, about two hours from London, where I could get some hunting. I would be glad of any information as to servants, etc., also what subscription to hounds would be necessary. Could I do this on £500 a year when once the thing was started? My wine bill would not be heavy, but, of course, it would be an item in housekeeping. I suppose two female servants would be necessary. Should I get a decent cottage with stabling, garden, and small field for £40 a year, including rates?—AUSTRALIAN.

[We are afraid this is quite out of the question in England. It might possibly be accomplished in Ireland, but in England such a life might be merry—it would certainly be short.—ED.]

### FAILURE OF THE CHINESE SACRED LILY TO FLOWER.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I should be much obliged if you would kindly tell me why my Chinese sacred lilies invariably run to leaf. Flower spikes show, but never come to anything. I am much disappointed, for I enjoy the fragrance of the flowers and their beauty too.—P. M.

[Evidently you keep the bulbs in too warm a temperature. The Chinese sacred lily, or good luck lily, is almost hardy, which you will understand when we say it is a form of *Narcissus tazetta*, as is evident from the character of the whole plant. When kept in a very warm room or away from the sunlight the foliage develops with great rapidity at the expense of flowers; the bulb, indeed, is worn out before the flowers are able to expand. In future, place the bulbs in a room only heated sufficiently to keep out frost, and in the window. You say nothing about the way the bulbs are treated. The proper plan is to about half fill the basin with small stones, place the bulbs on these, then pour in sufficient water to cover them. Always keep the bowl supplied with water to this extent. An occasional pinch of some approved fertiliser will promote a sturdy growth. After the bulbs have flowered they are of no further use. This so-called lily is one of the most interesting of all flowering window plants, and when well grown flowers abundantly.—ED.]

### SPEED SKATING AT DAVOS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—At a time when speed skating competitions are taking place at home it may be of interest to you to have the enclosed photographs taken on the



11th ult., and representing Peder Oestlund winning the Davos Cup. No. 1 shows the start, Oestlund being next the timekeeper, and No. 2 the same skater rounding one of the corners. I am sorry I could not get a photograph of the cross position of the legs in taking curves, a position which has to be seen photographed to be believed possible. It is interesting to note that in this race of 10,000 metres Oestlund reduced the world's record of 17min. 56sec., hitherto held by Eden, by 5 2-5sec. Oestlund is a powerfully-built man, with a wonderfully long and strong stroke, as also one of the most modest of winners.—G. M. M. R.

#### PLANTS FOR GROUND BENEATH TREES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."] Sir,—Will you kindly give me the names of some plants to place under trees. Grass absolutely refuses to grow, but I am told that certain plants do not object even to the shade and poor soil about the stem of large trees.—M.

[Very few plants are happy under these conditions. If grass will not live, it is hopeless to expect vegetation of any kind to thrive. The most satisfactory plant, as a rule, is ivy. This is frequently planted, and invariably with success. Plant strong pieces of the common Ivy canariense or of Emerald Green, and to give the plants a start put in the hole made for them a little fresh loamy soil and manure. During the first summer, at any rate, water them so as to promote quick growth. The periwinkles (Vinca major) and the pretty smaller species called minor may be tried, also the rose of Sharon (Hypericum calycinum), but this is more shrubby than the periwinkles and ivy. Unless the soil is very poor many bulbs will flower under trees. Groups of daffodils may be planted amongst ivy with success, also the vigorous Spanish scillas (S. campanulata), of which there are very pretty rose and white forms. This is, of course, only a species in the bluebell family, and we know that almost in dense shade this fragrant flower spreads freely. Crocuses will flower also, and masses of these in the early spring are very bright, but where such bulbs are used ivy is impossible. Daffodils and scillas are amongst the only bulbs to plant with ivy.—ED.]

#### FRUIT FARMING IN ITALY.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."] Sir,—I am thinking of trying fruit farming in Italy, and should be much obliged if you or any of your readers could give me any information about it, especially as to (1) what fruits are possible, and in what districts; (2) what markets are available, either on the spot or for export; (3) whether fruit farming there has been tried before; and, if so, with what results.—Z.

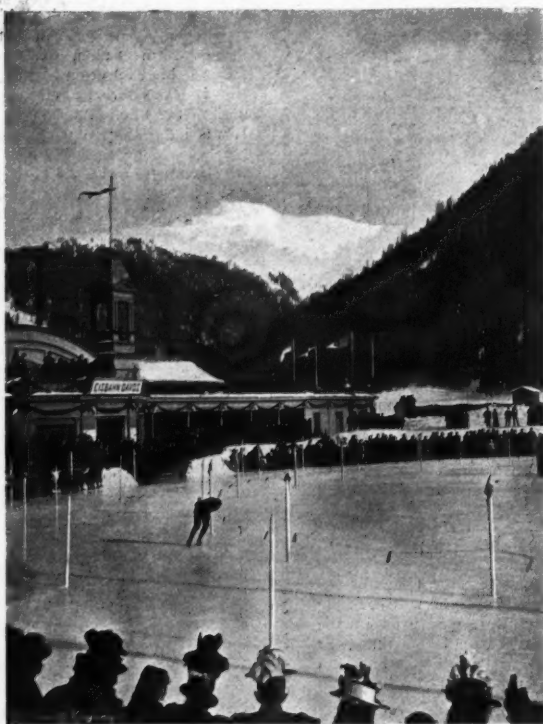
[We print this note in the hope that some reader may be able to help our correspondent.—ED.]

#### RIFLE RANGES FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."] Sir,—I have read with much interest your leading article on "Rifle Ranges for Public Schools." I believe the right key has been struck by you, and I sincerely trust that those with influence will keep the subject before the public until the matter is taken up. Public opinion is alive to the all-importance of straight shooting at the present moment. Now is, therefore, the time to take advantage of the feeling—as you suggest—and press for facilities for ranges, not only for public schools, but for the youth of the country generally. The importance of having an easily accessible rifle range for every public school cannot be over-estimated. Every public school boy should be taught all about a rifle as a matter of national importance. Many of these boys are, as it were, born to seats in the House of Commons, and may at some time or other have to vote enormous sums for new weapons. It would be well, therefore, that they should be able to form a sound judgment on the merits or otherwise of a new rifle whenever it is considered advisable to rearm our troops. Again, in the event of European complications, the "old" public school boys would, in the majority of cases, be looked up to as leaders. But unless they knew all about a rifle and its deadly effect at long range, what use would they be? With facilities and encouragement, I believe the schoolboy would become as keen at the range as he is to-day at the wicket.—J. H. PATTERSON.

#### A SPORTING CART-HORSE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."] Sir,—I do not know if you would think the following story worthy of a place in COUNTRY LIFE. Recently an old farm labourer, a friend of mine, told me that he and others were loading a waggon with straw at an outlying farm near here. A very large wood lies about a quarter of a mile at the back. The leader of the team was detached and was standing behind the rick. Suddenly the men heard a tremendous cackling among the poultry, of which a large number are kept at these buildings, and hens were seen flying for refuge to the farm. Someone said "It must be a fox," and they went to look. On going behind the rick it was reported that Jolly, the horse, was gone. "Wherever be Jolly then?" was the cry, and running to look, Jolly was seen going full gallop towards the wood close upon the heels of a fox, his harness falling about on his back, but in hot pursuit all the same. One of the men ran up the field and called him by name, and the intelligent creature at once stopped and returned, being caught without any difficulty. As the old labourer told me this curious story he led Jolly attached to a water-cart. He is a fine iron-grey horse, of powerful build, and the man summed up the matter in a few words: "There, I never in all my life did hear tell of such a thing; but Jolly he be a most sensible horse;" and I fancy as this personal remark was made



that Jolly gave a knowing wink of approval behind his blinker.—W. G. GODOLPHIN OSBORNE.

#### COUNTRY COTTAGES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."] Sir,—The letter in your issue of the 17th ult. from R. M. Newall touches very closely the difficulties of the country cottage problem, and though much is perfectly true, yet there are one or two points which are open to argument. Unfortunately, perhaps, we live in a utilitarian age, in which but little building is done unless a return is obtainable for the outlay, consequently cottages and workmen's houses being built of the cheapest materials and in the most economical manner have become correspondingly uninteresting. In addition to this, as I said in my former letter, in a large and rapidly-increasing area of the country the Local Government Board's Building Acts, framed ostensibly for the control and supervision of buildings in towns and cities, are now adopted with but slight modifications by various local and district councils, and country cottages in villages and hamlets where these bye-laws are in force can only be erected as if in the midst of our most populous cities. It has apparently been regarded as an axiom to condemn as insanitary all old buildings of the cottage type which do not conform with modern theories, and that this is so is proved by the fact that if exact copies of houses that have been standing for some hundreds of years were made to-day they would not be allowed. It surely

amounts to vexatious faddism, and interference with the liberty of the public, that rules should be enforced stipulating for the exact amount of window space, floor area, heights of rooms, and other trivial details, matters which doubtless are essential in towns, but not so necessary in the country. No one can find fault with regulations as to the employment of good and sound materials, and as a check upon the somewhat too economical methods of the speculative builder these bye-laws are most beneficial, but where they are used simply as a means of hampering, by petty restrictions, landowners and others, who only have the intention of building well, they are surely unnecessary, and add unreasonably to the cost. It is also hardly fair to complain that builders do not use the local materials of the district, for here again, in most cases, expense is the first consideration. With the opening up of the country by railways, and the consequent distribution of cheaper materials, a more cosmopolitan method of building has become general, and as a result in very many districts in England—remote or otherwise—the old local styles of building are gradually dying out, and it is almost impossible, except at unreasonable cost, to adopt them. In the West of England, for instance, it is the rarest exception to see new cottages built with thick stone walls, mullioned windows, and steep pitched stone slated roofs, as the cost is prohibitive, and thin brick walls and blue Welsh slates, materials entirely out of harmony with the district, take their place. In Derbyshire and Yorkshire the large flat roofing slates that one sees and admires on the old houses and cottages are things of the past; the quarries are unworked, and not one slater in fifty would know how to lay them. In Norfolk, amongst the Broads and rush-growing districts, where do we see new cottages or houses thatched with reeds or straw, which make the best of roofs, warm in winter and cool in summer? And as a natural result the craft of the thatcher, like that of the stone slater, is gradually dying out. In the same county the thick-walled flint buildings, with the old Dutch pantiled roofs, are no longer built, and it is the same all over England, the old local styles so typical of various districts are slowly but surely becoming obliterated and lost.—E. GUY DAWBER.

#### SUMMER PALACE DOG.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."] Sir,—At the sacking of the Summer Palace, near Peking, in 1860, at which I was present, two officers of my regiment, the 99th Foot, looted a dog and bitch of the Palace breed. Shortly after our return to Canton the bitch had a litter of pups, one of which I got and brought to England in 1863. He lived in perfect health for nearly seventeen years, and was one of the most perfect dogs I ever met with in intelligence and habits. He only had one offspring out of another little Summer Palace dog that belonged to Captain Claghites Henderson, R.N., and she died about the same time as he did. I enclose his photograph.—H. TOWNSEND.

